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# APOLLO

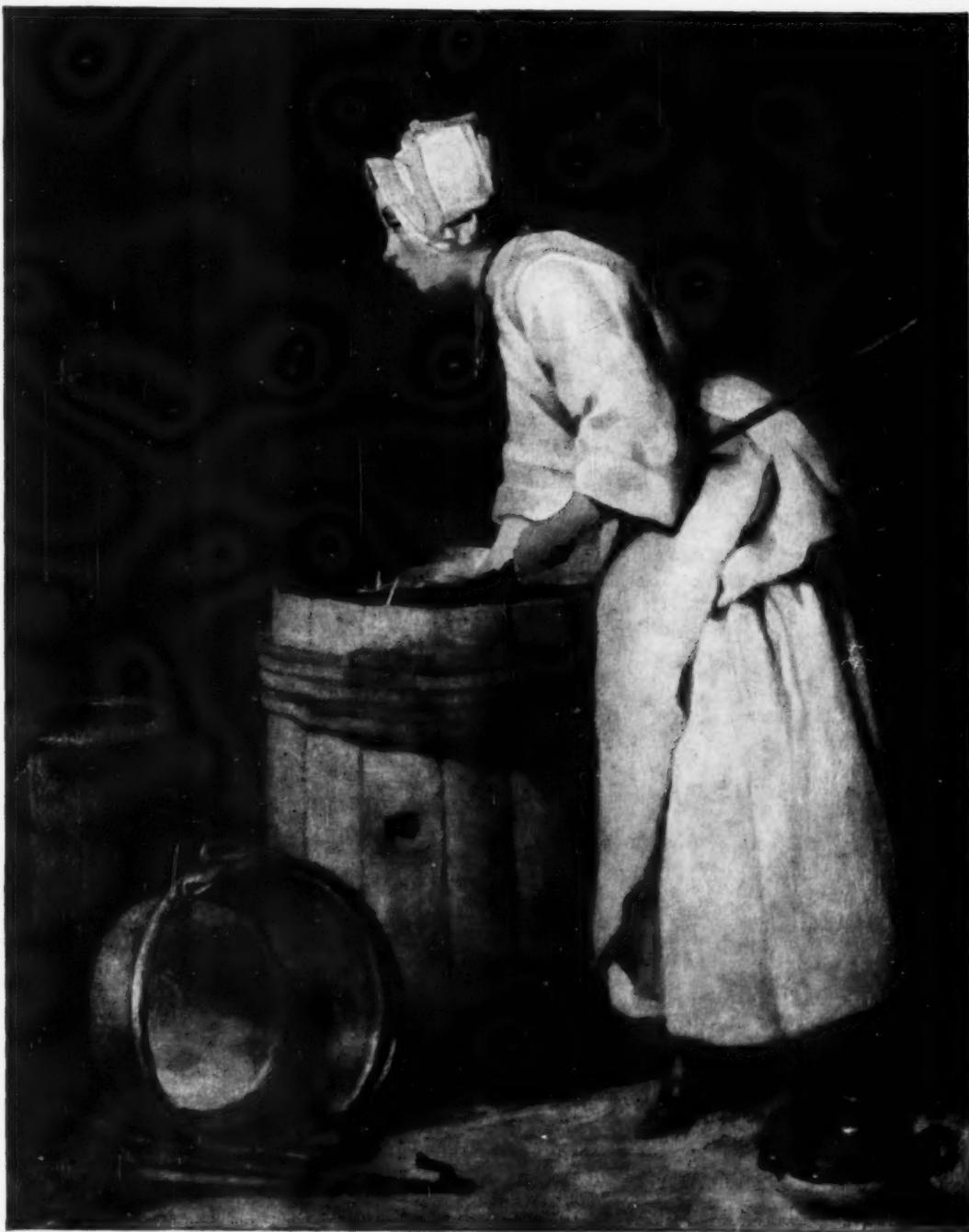
1951

*the Magazine of the Arts for*

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## A P O L L O

# APOLLO

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# CURRENT SHOWS AND COMMENTS

BY  
PERSPEX

## THE GRAND MANNER, AND THE NOT-SO-GRAND



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IT is the perpetual dilemma of the critic that his task is on the one side to encourage his contemporaries, and on the other to uphold the highest standards and the greatest traditions. *Hac urget lupus, hac canis.* Perhaps it is impossible to tread that perfect middle way which shall deliver him neither to the wolf nor the dog, which shall not send some promising lad back to his gallipots, nor talk about his prentice efforts in the same breath as of Michelangelo. Nor, alas, does the difficulty appreciably lessen when the promising lad has become a noisy arrivé—all too often in these days a process of surprising celerity. I am enviously aware of the fact that there are among my fellow critics those of such discernment that they discover a genius a week, so that obviously only the peak of the High Renaissance in Italy can compare with our own period. Granted one sometimes wonders what happens to all their penultimate discoveries, at least until one is confronted with the performance of their ultimate ones. My own more cautious and less rhapsodic approach is certainly not so adventurous; and posterity must decide the issue.

These meditations are occasioned by the events of the month, the outstanding excitements of which have been the opening of the Winter Exhibition at the Royal Academy—"Works by Holbein and Other Masters of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries"; the showing at

the Orangery at Kensington Palace of the enormous canvases which Rubens created for the ceiling of the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace; and, on the modern side, the opening of the new Exhibition Gallery of the Institute of Contemporary Arts where we have a sample of modernism at its best. There have also, of course, been the usual selection of one-man shows. The month has been rather a close season for geniuses: only two have been discovered; one a rather terrifying young negro of twenty-six, and the other an Italian shoemaker who painted every Sunday and most evenings. Actually Denis Williams, the negro who comes from British Guiana, is really promising; the shoemaker . . . But let us put first things first, and at some risk of paronomasia, last things last.

The Royal Academy of Arts has for its fundamental purpose the maintenance of the great tradition in art. We will not here discuss whether the Annual Summer Exhibitions at Burlington House achieve this desirable end; but the Winter Shows of Old Masters, which have continued with wartime interruptions for eighty years, unquestionably do. Here, indeed, are the standards, and here the opportunity for the artist, the student, the connoisseur, and the amateur of art to see the best magnificently assembled.

This year was to have carried on that great series of exhibitions of National Schools which between the two wars gave us such delight.

"THE CROWNING  
OF THE INFANT  
CHARLES."

By RUBENS.

*Detail from the  
Whitehall Banqueting  
Hall Panels.*

PERSPEX's choice for  
the Picture of the  
Month.

## A P O L L O

An Exhibition of German Art was planned. The work of Holbein would inevitably have been the high light of that exhibition, and, when the difficulties of these uncertain times made it impossible to carry out the scheme, Holbein remained the supreme attraction. His Majesty the King offered the Academy the freedom of his collection, and more than two hundred works, chiefly the Holbein drawings from Windsor, were loaned from it. Add to this whole walls of drawings by Michelangelo and Raphael, and some remarkable drawings by the XVIIth century Italian eclectics, and the drawings in this exhibition come to the forefront.

The Holbeins are superb, and it is excellent that the rooms containing these are accented here and there by the paintings themselves hung alongside the original studies. These latter are usually in black and red chalk on a priming of light pink, with a few sharper notes in Indian ink, and sometimes a touch of colour. Some of them have the artist's own notes of the colours of costume or accessories, for Holbein made these drawings from the sitters and then created the pictures away in his studio. Was ever line so exquisitely used? Other draughtsmen use the arbitrary convention of line as limit to the form; Holbein can make the firmest possible line serve to suggest the twist of the plane, the merging of form with form. A student of drawing could spend time very valuably simply observing the sure Indian ink line which Holbein again and again uses to define the contact of the lips and noticing what character—actual psychological character—as well as representation of surface he achieves, and with what certainty of touch. Holbein is the Shakespeare of art. He is concerned with personality, that discovery of the Renaissance, and with that greatness of humanism which was manifest in such men as Erasmus, More, and Fisher.

The rest of the Exhibition is diversion. It has its languors, but there are brilliant moments and some surprises which should make for revaluation. The Michelangelo drawings and those of Raphael are, of course, perfect in their own way; but this is expected beauty. Personally, because it was less expected, I had a thrill from the fineness of the drawings hung in the Lecture Room and coming from the XVIIth century men. Those of Annibale Carracci in particular proved exciting, and some of the works of Bernini scarcely less so. It was these eclectics and tenebrists, baroque men and mannerists, who provided the surprises. In the XVIIth century they were regarded as the greatest artists, and their often vast flamboyant canvases held favour well into the Victorian era. Ruskin trained his big guns on them. When he is assigning orders of excellence to the world's great masters, he exhausts his diminishing degrees of rank and finishes:

"... and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved, of no rank, or, as we said before, of a certain order in the abyss."

Had he lived till now we could have most richly demonstrated the "certain orders of the abyss" and it is perhaps for that reason that, when we look again at the paintings and drawings of these men who fell out of fashion largely because of his strictures, we react with some delight. The Salvator Rosa "Wooded Landscape"; the magnificent Guido Reni "St. John the Baptist Preaching," from Dulwich College; that other youthful "St. John Baptist" by Caravaggio, demonstrating all his qualities and his innovations of realist peasant model, theatrical lighting, dramatic pose, all the things which Ruskin probably hated so much: these were the thrills. It may be that only half, the right-hand half, of the "Wooded Landscape" is truly great; and it may be also that these pictures would not wear; but it will be an excellent result of this fine exhibition if we revalue some Old Masters who for too long have been demodé.

The other adventure on the heights has been the opportunity to see some of the cleaned and restored Rubens canvases from the Whitehall ceiling which have been on show at the Orangery, Kensington Palace, before their return to the ceiling. They are tremendously impressive, an eruption of creative energy which shows Rubens as the giant he was. One envies him the opportunity of painting a surface approximately the size of a tennis court, even while one sympathises with him about his subject. But Rubens was an adept at painting blatant flattery and could invent a mythology suitable for any occasion. In the work for the Whitehall ceiling he was at his most vigorous, and it is that grand manner which remains in mind combined with the delicacy of the colouring and the freedom of handling which are pure Rubens. One thinks back to the exquisite painting of the "Brueghel Family" portrait at Burlington House. This exhibition, following the recent one at Wildenstein's when we saw some of the sketches for this ceiling, adds something to our knowledge of the artist.

Controversy has arisen whether the cleaning and restoration have in fact been done wisely or well, whether the Board of Works

failed to use the resources of the National Gallery, etc., etc. At least we will hope that the publicity led by Sir Gerald Kelly will take many viewers to see this magnificent ceiling in situ early this year, and that the Board of Works will take advantage of modern methods of lighting to enable us really to see it.

This intercourse with giants necessitates a violent readjustment of our standards when we come to examine even the best of our contemporaries. The opening of the new premises of the Institute of Contemporary Arts has been marked by a mixed show of the work of thirty-six of them. It is—when we have forgotten Holbein and Rubens and their kind—exciting and stimulating. Personally I bring away from the Old Masters a demand that art shall show technical achievement no matter what kind of vision the painter or sculptor cultivates. Dadaism and babaism and gagaism and all other deliberate manifestations of ineptitude I have no use for, whatever world-shaking names are attached to them, or whatever highbrows, official or amateur, are prostrate with admiration before them. Happily there is little of this kind of thing in this show. There is a good deal of abstract work, including one work by the latest convert to it, Victor Pasmore. Of its kind I enjoyed the formal quality of this and the colour of Irene Rice Pereira's "Rose Glows"; but I believe its kind is sterile to a degree. Let me confess that just on thirty years ago I wrote either the first or one of the first books defending Abstract Art, and I leave others to decide whether my second thoughts are adult wisdom or what has been called "hardening of the intellectual arteries." Now that it has become a vogue it seems to me too easy, too empty, and to be leading nowhere. Every truly great picture is, in fact, a perfect abstract pattern, but twenty other things besides. Anyway, we would ask to be spared the bits of newspaper (preferably French which is so much more aesthetic, my dear) gummed on to give texture and succeeding in giving irritation and a day-before-yesterday-in-Paris air.

Victor Pasmore has a one-man show over at the Redfern Galleries and it is devoted entirely to this abstract idiom. It simply isn't good enough for him. He can safely go on painting his delicate Whistlerian fantasies, and leave us to discover the abstraction underlying them. He can leave this ABC of art to those who are unable to advance beyond the alphabet.

Next to his picture at the I.C.A. was a large canvas by Denis Williams, of whom I have already spoken as a discovery of the month, for he has his first one-man show at Gimpel Fils, and Wyndham Lewis is his sponsor. Twenty-six, a negro who has lived in British Guiana, Williams now is in London with a British Council scholarship. His work is virile, horrific. He can depict humanity surging forward glaring through spectacles and surrounded by urban architecture, so that the breath of the jungle comes to our nostrils. The Asphalt Jungle might be the title of most of his work. It is at present not completely organised and is therefore rather incoherent. It is grotesquely ugly, and bitterly satirical. But it has power and promise. It links in spirit with that of Edward Burra, though it is entirely different. Incidentally one of the most effective works at the I.C.A. show was by Burra, a vast gouache on paper in his usual style, "Peter and the High Priest's Servant." Here again was a painting ugly and violent enough, but one was forced to admire the magnificent design and execution. Perhaps we should blame the times in which we live for the violence; indeed, perhaps the theme of the picture was "in purpose a moral tale," to an age which believes that the ends of salvation are best served by this cutting off of the ears of the servants of the opposing powers.

Another contribution to contemporary art which certainly does spring directly from the soil of its environment is that of the Australian artist, Russell Drysdale, whose first English exhibition is at the Leicester Galleries. Well known in his own country, Drysdale brings us his dreadful realistic pictures of the least attractive aspects of it, pictures in hot browns and ochreous yellows of the eroded landscape of North Queensland. The encroaching sand and the anthills which rise like sentinels of doom between the jagged broken stumps of the cork trees, fallen shacks which leave only nightmare forms of corrugated iron, or shacks unfallen and still lived in by "Angry Harrison," "Tractor-faced Jackson" or "Joe": the whole vision adds up to something looking like excesses of Surrealism but is probably only simple fact. Russell Drysdale has brilliantly "put it across." So powerfully has he made us aware, that we incline to accuse him of journalism, but it is literature of the modern tough school. This is truth, not beauty, unless we look at the way Drysdale puts his colour on, or composes such a picture as "Broken Mountain."

In the adjoining room Robert Buhler, one of the younger A.R.A.'s whose work we have learned to look for on the walls of the Royal

## SHAFTS FROM APOLLO'S BOW



ERASMUS. By HOLBEIN.  
From the Collection of the Earl of Radnor.  
Holbein and Other Masters Exhibition, Burlington House.

Academy, gives us a series of English landscapes presented in his own way of Impressionism. His subjects are not in themselves beautiful—a beet field, a cabbage field, a sea wall with a few railings—but he gives them beauty without sentimentalising them. And he makes one glad to be in England away from those anthills and sandhills.

We have this same feeling of quiet enjoyment of the English scene with most of the Contemporary Painters at Wildensteins. The pictures are generally on a small scale and the approach is the able Impressionism of artists who have learned to paint. There are no shock tactics about this painting, but that satisfactory craftsmanship which is infinitely more worth while. One particularly interesting artist there is Gusti Knight, who works in a vein of high finish and meticulous draughtsmanship: the healthy reaction from slapdash, hit-or-miss which passes for technique in some quarters.

Over against this stands Robert Colquhoun at the Lefevre. I do not pretend to know what an artist of this kind is at. He has been to Siena, that lovely city, and seen the Pàlio, that beautiful survival of mediaeval pageantry. He shows it as a series of hideous grotesques of men and horses, boys whose faces slip terribly sideways, and street-sellers styleised into mere and exceedingly horrid patterns. The ugliness is incredible, but even that does not make it art; or does it? This is the kind of highly-praised badness which is the absolute negation of all true values in art. There is a little (but not much) sense of design; no draughtsmanship; no quality of colour; no newness of vision; nothing in fact to make it worth while at all. It is unbelievably dull: infinitely more so than the work of straightforward academic painters of the worst kind against which, we will assume, it is a reaction. That is the paradox of the modern manner and idiom. If I have missed the significance I would welcome being told precisely what it is, so long as I am not merely assured that it is "interesting" or "amusing."

## SHAFTS FROM APOLLO'S BOW

### Gentlemen versus Players

If I were asked to give advice to a young painter I think I should pass on that which I once heard A. P. Herbert give to embryonic writers. "Don't let anybody know you are writing seriously," he said. "Sell cheese, cabbages, anything, and publishers will send out their talent spotters to beg you write your best-selling 'Chats of a Cheesemonger.' Write professionally and you will hawk your MSS. from publisher to publisher without success." Those may not have been the exact words, but that was the idea. I was reminded of it by the acclaim that has been accorded to that new phenomenon in the art world, Orneore Metelli, the Shoemaker of Terni.

The Foreword to the Catalogue of his first one-man show, a model of filial piety, tells us that he was a brilliant shoemaker, World Cobbler Number One, who won prizes for his shoes in International Shows. But he had a soul above this. He played the trombone in the town band, and at the age of fifty

"at a time when one gives up childish pastimes and takes shelter in the bosom of the family, his urge for artistic expression forced him also to try his hand at painting."

Thenceforth he rose at dawn and burned the midnight 100 watt lamp in pursuit of art, and eventually died in the early hours of a morning sixteen years afterwards, painting still.

How he managed to paint for sixteen years without discovering how is beyond me. But he probably knew that there was no surer path to obscurity for any artist than that of knowing how to paint. The event proves him right. His exhibition comes to an important London Gallery. The critics fall over themselves in praise of his *naïveté*; he gets the front page of *The Listener* and a eulogy inside; and there are murmurs of another *douanier Rousseau*, that pioneer on the path towards the puerile.

"I like to know a butcher paints,  
Candlestick maker who acquaints  
His soul with music."

Browning, thou should'st be living at this hour; you could absolutely depend upon a job as fashionable art critic, broadcaster and general counsellor of the arts. The eulogy which accompanies the sweetly idiotic Self-Portrait in the B.B.C.'s official journal does not, it is true, go so far as to claim that Signor Metelli could paint. It even confesses that the critic would have found nothing in the shoemaker's opposite number who made the mistake of being born in Britain.

"A shoemaker-painter from Harpenden would leave me comparatively cold."

So native shoemakers had better stick to their lasts, for apparently it is the charm of provincial Southern Europe which is the real attraction. And, of course, the innocence, the *naïveté*, the childishness of putting a balloon containing the words "Good Sport" emitting from the mouth of one of his staffage. There is a suggestion that this artist is in the line of L. S. Lowry and Brueghel:

"England's only counterpart is L. S. Lowry, who is just halfway between Metelli and Brueghel."

We will leave mathematicians with an appreciation of aesthetics to work out that delicate equation, which must have come as a surprise to Mr. Lowry. Personally I would not subscribe to the "only," for most kindergarten teachers will provide half-a-dozen youngsters who paint exactly this Metelli sort of thing in exactly the same manner, balloons and all. These potential rivals, however, may have ruined their chances in the Brueghel stakes by being born at Harpenden or somewhere equally impossible. Nor will they have devoted their leisure for sixteen years to the accomplishment.

The interesting thing about this curious business—and this takes us back to my point of departure—is that the article in question continues immediately to consider the exhibition of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and Thwack! Thwack!! Thwack!!! Not a word of praise for anybody or anything. A wonder "how an art that was practised by Titian and Rembrandt and our own Hogarth could ever come to this"; and "did the rot set in with Van Dyck and Lawrence?" We are not here concerned to defend the works of Augustus John, Pietro Annigoni (who at least took the precaution of being born out of England), or certain others whom in our lowbrow way we thought could paint; and, of course, we would not dare to say a word for such hardened professionals as James Gunn, Sir Oswald Birley, T. C. Dugdale, or Frank Salisbury. But in our uninstructed way we thought that some of these pros. were as good as the Self-Portrait by Orneore Metelli. Which goes to show how wrong one can be about Art.

## Bronzes—Mediaeval and Modern

THOUGH far from surprising, the decision of the German authorities not to send their most precious art treasures across the Channel to Burlington House in the present political circumstances has deprived us of what would doubtless have been a worthy successor to the great series of exhibitions of European art that have been held there in the past. In view of the destruction of so many of the museum and gallery buildings in Germany it is not easy, even if one undertakes the journey there, to obtain access to many of the greatest monuments of German art. The monuments of architecture are destroyed and the smaller works of art are still kept in store pending rebuilding of the galleries which should house them. There have been important exhibitions of German art since the war inside Germany, and one of these, the *Ars Sacra* exhibition held in the autumn of 1950 in Munich, was also shown in the previous year in Bern. Those who had the opportunity to travel to either of these cities and saw the exhibition there can congratulate themselves on having seen an assemblage of early mediaeval art of an importance that is not likely to be repeated within many years. The *Ars Sacra* exhibition covered religious art of Germany from the IVth to the XIIIth century, and achieved, within this somewhat circumscribed field, a very comprehensive picture; in fact, apart from the Guelph Treasure which is presumably still at the Celle Collecting Point, every important ecclesiastical treasury of western Germany was represented with its finest pieces. This early mediaeval art (it is really superfluous to use the qualifying term "religious," for we have so little knowledge of an independent secular art of the period), dominated by hieratic convention, usually austere, but sometimes indulging in a barbaric splendour of colour, is not a form of expression that can be easily understood and enjoyed. It seems to belong much more distinctly to its original period and purpose than the religious art of later periods. Whereas a Renaissance chalice or a Baroque monstrance, or even a reliquary, could be placed as a decorative object in a collector's house without looking particularly out of place amongst predominantly secular surroundings, the art-forms of the early Middle Ages brook no such treatment and demand a setting in which their other-worldly and monumental character can be appreciated undisturbed by the, in comparison, frivolous style of post-Renaissance art.

In spite of its title, which was, incidentally, changed to "Early Christian Art" because the Latin title proved too forbidding for the general public, there were just a few non-ecclesiastical objects in the Munich exhibition. These were aquamaniles, the brass vessels from which water was poured by a servant over the hands of the diners at the conclusion of a meal, the early mediaeval equivalent of the ewer and rosewater bowl of the Renaissance. Though there must have been a large production of these ewers in the bronze and brass founding district of the valley of the River Meuse during the Middle Ages, they are now of the utmost rarity and fetch at least three figures at auction, sometimes even approaching a four-figure price. The rarest, which are formed as an armoured knight wearing the huge tilting helmet of the XIIIth and XIVth century, are by now practically all in public or permanent collections. The somewhat less rare

examples in the form of a lion, to the back of which, forming a handle, a monster or grotesque human figure is attached, are seen from time to time in the London sale-rooms. It takes, however, not only a rich man, but also a brave man to buy them, for, during the latter part of the XIXth century, a German firm sold reproductions of the examples then in German public museums. It is now some fifty or sixty years since these were made and in the intervening years they have acquired a very convincing patina. One should therefore acquaint oneself with the German collections before risking their purchase over here.

The aquamaniles are divided somewhat uncertainly by the experts between the valley of the Meuse (Mosoan art) and the German province of Niedersachsen, in particular the cities of Hildesheim and Braunschweig. From the latter come also the small candlesticks in the form of monsters, elephants, lions, etc., supporting on their back a pricket for the candle. These are by no means so rare as the aquamaniles and come within the reach of the ordinary collector. Indeed, they sometimes go cheaply owing to the great difficulty in determining with certainty whether any given example is authentic or not. Like the lion ewers, they were copied during the XIXth century and if the reproduction has in the meantime acquired a good patina, it is not easy to recognise. These early mediaeval bronzes were produced by the *cire-perdu* process of casting. It follows that no two could be exactly alike, though, as they were manufactured in quantity, a number of fairly standard types exist. The fakers did not confine themselves to making reproductions of the examples in the museums; in order to vary things a little, they mixed the parts up, and produced composite pieces, in which the foot might be based on one authentic original, the stem and knob on another, and the top on yet a third. Where, however, they endeavoured to produce new compositions from their own imagination, they usually made mistakes. The spirit of mediaeval art is no easier to simulate than it is to comprehend. Referring to these early candlesticks in his book on Fakes, Dr. Kurz of the Warburg Institute made the point that "it should be reckoned as a fatal verdict if a candlestick has a thorn (pricket) too thick and blunt for its purpose." Actually, however, the thorns of early candlesticks have very often been renewed, sometimes in recent times, and the renewal has not always been carried out by someone who knew just how such a thorn should look. A thorn of poor shape is not therefore necessarily proof that a candlestick is not authentic.

In the case of the ewers, one would think that the weight should give some indication of authenticity or otherwise. A ewer that is too heavy to pour comfortably from could hardly be a genuine one; this is true to some extent, but the mediaeval ones were cast remarkably thick. A very fine example in the Hamburg Museum, for instance, weighs over five pounds, and when filled with water is certainly not easy to use.

Early mediaeval bronzes are not so rare that they may no longer be "picked up" by the fortunate and observant collector. I saw the other day a small gilt bronze figure of the Virgin from a crucifixion group which had been bought for five shillings in a country town market; it dated from the XIIth century.

M.A.Q.

# ROBERT ADAM'S INFLUENCE ON FURNITURE DESIGN

BY LORAIN CONRAN



Fig. I. Design for door furniture at Syon House.  
By kind permission of Sir John Soane's Museum.

HERE is often speculation on the reasons why English XVIIIth century furniture kept such a general standard of excellence. Craftsmanship, tradition and the taste of aristocratic patrons are usually held to be paramount reasons. The high standard of craftsmanship is unquestionable, but during the XVIIIth century tradition was at war with the patrons' demand for novelty, which could cause contradictory styles to succeed one another and even to co-exist. That conscious design may have been one of the most potent factors has not been fully considered.

It is possible that William Kent and Robert Adam had more influence on furniture in their time than all Chippendale's craftsmen or the patrons who were paying. Even Horace Walpole exerted his influence not primarily as a patron but as amateur adviser and architect. Today he might have had a shop off Bond Street and been counted as a professional himself.

Both Kent and Adam designed furniture to suit the buildings for which they were responsible and were by no means the only architects to do so. Robert Adam's influence on furniture was especially strong. His buildings achieved a light and delicate effect which was carried out in every detail of decoration. Just as the early XVIIIth century would make even a small room, like the Salon at Marble Hill, Twickenham, weighty and solid in appearance, so Adam would make even a large one, like the Gallery at Syon, light and graceful.

A corresponding change was necessary in furniture. Massive pieces of the kind designed by William Kent for Chatsworth would have been entirely out of place, so would rococo or Chinese fantasies which lack the geometrical framework of Adam's designs. The neo-classical style was a logical result of applying his architectural ideas to furniture. The tea room at Moor Park, with palm foliage used as a decorative motif instead of conventional capitals, shows that Adam might have evolved a style out of elements differing from the classical themes



Fig. II. Sideboard with numerous accessories for Kenwood.  
Taken from *The Works in Architecture of James and Robert Adam*.  
By kind permission of Sir John Soane's Museum.

which he chose; but even here the furniture has straight fluted legs and an architectural treatment of classical themes which remained in his mature style. The Oriental origin of tea may have suggested the use of palms in the tea room, although they are treated in a symmetrical manner at variance with rococo taste.

Ralph Edwards and Margaret Jourdain have shown in *Georgian Cabinet Makers* that the finest products of the Chippendale firm were its later works in the neoclassical style, using inlay and ormolu. They praise the high standard of technical achievement and this is certainly due to Chippendale, but there can be no doubt that Robert Adam was primarily responsible for the change in Chippendale's production. *The Gentleman & Cabinet Maker's Director* established Chippendale's fame both in his day and ours. It gives no support to Chippendale as a designer and initiator. He occupied more the position of publisher than author of the designs it contains. They show a variety of influences; most strongly, perhaps, the fashionable French rococo, adapted but not transformed as might have been done by a strongly original designer.

The relationship between Adam and Chippendale is not fully established. Both were members of the Society of Arts and could meet socially outside any business relationship which may have existed, but the evidence of bills for work carried out does not support any closer association than normal between an architect and one of his contractors.

The furniture for Kenwood was supplied by William France; Chippendale only came into the transaction as sub-contractor for some items such as the great mirrors between the windows in the library and in this case a penalty was imposed in the event of non-delivery, which is further evidence against any special link between Adam and Chippendale.

Adam's designs were also carried out by other cabinet makers such as Samuel Norman. There is evidence that the furniture designed by Adam in 1764 for Moor Park,



Fig. III. Mahogany reading table supplied for the library at Kenwood by William France c. 1770 at the same time that he was carrying out Adam's own designs for this room. It is 25 years earlier in style than Adam's.

By kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

later at 19 Arlington Street, was supplied by Norman. Adam's activities as an architect are exceptionally well documented owing to the existence of a large collection of his drawings in Sir John Soane's Museum. Whenever furniture can be compared with the corresponding drawings it is very close indeed. There can be no doubt that Adam's was the controlling mind, and that he called on cabinet makers for technical skill in carrying out his designs not for assistance in formulating them.

When whole households of furniture are considered, Adam's controlling influence on the development of furniture in the second half of the XVIIIth century is even more clear.

The furniture for Moor Park shows some transitional features. This is especially obvious in the set of chairs with claw feet, shell motifs and an air of solidity in comparison with later examples. The carved and gilt side table, however, is more forward looking and would easily take its place in a series of such tables designed by Adam. If this series was then compared with a similar set designed by Kent, the great change brought about by Robert Adam would be very obvious.

There were even earlier indications, such as a pair of looking glasses and console tables for Shardeloes, that Adam started his practice after his return from Italy without any doubt of the style in which he wanted to work and that it was very different from the current fashion. The furniture at Nostell Priory has none of the transitional character noticed at Moor Park. Mr. Lees-Milne has pointed out in *The Age of Adam* that this is especially important because the Nostell furniture antedates the revival of the neo-classical style in France. He mentions a set of lyre-backed chairs paid for in 1768. The lyre back was a popular motif in France but did not appear there until the next decade.

Because of the similarity between the Adam style and Louis Seize it has been loosely assumed that there was the



Fig. IV. Gilt armchair, designed by Robert Adam and made in 1764 by Samuel Norman. An early example of Adam's work with transitional features.

By kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

same relationship between them as between the rococo of Chippendale's "Director" and equivalent French furniture. Chippendale and his draughtsmen were undoubtedly adapting the fashion for French furniture to the English market and not always doing so in a very practical or understanding manner, but the tide was running the other way in the case of Adam. He made extensive studies of buildings in Italy and Dalmatia, but neither Robert nor his brother James stayed long in France. Whether there was any direct influence on French production is difficult to prove, although some French ébénistes advertised that they made furniture in the English manner and French craftsmen and designers were employed in England.

Adam designed a harpsichord for the Empress Catherine of Russia; his influence was certainly felt in that country and was given expression through the work of another Scotsman, Charles Campbell, in such buildings as the Tsarko Selo Palace.

Looking West instead of East, Adam's influence is easily recognised in America. He is, in fact, one of the great original designers and was the first to formulate a new style which later flowed round the world. It is little wonder, then, that Chippendale came under his influence.

Harewood House is perhaps the supreme example of Chippendale as a cabinet maker and Adam as a designer. None of the drawings exists to prove authorship, but there are two distinct kinds of furniture in the house. One is of the normal Chippendale "Director" type and may have been supplied from stock; the other clearly



Fig. V. Cabinet; rosewood and satinwood veneers with inlaid decorations and gilt bronze mounts. Made from a design by Robert Adam dated 1771.

By kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

designed for the house and bearing the intellectual quality of Adam's own manner; of this latter type are the sideboard, pedestals and wine cooler of rosewood mounted with ormolu and inlaid with various woods.

The same duality of style can be seen in the mahogany reading table made by William France for Kenwood in 1770 and the sofa and armchairs designed by Adam and supplied for the same house by France. This clearly shows that Adam was the originator and was not merely following the current of fashion. Without him the neo-classical which was not in full sway in France until the 'eighties might have reached us in a different and less perfect form towards the end of the century.

There are limitations to Adam as a designer due mainly to his intellectual approach. He wanted to create completely the frame for a civilised life. His own studies of the antique provided the basis. He was not interested in the intrinsic qualities of his materials and worked as happily with substitutes. His pillars were often of wood, and sometimes even cast iron. Only very occasionally did he use the real thing as in the anteroom at Syon and the entrance hall at Kedleston. Generally speaking Adam furniture was a projection of his architectural principles on a small scale and his most typical and successful productions were made when he was not working in plain wood but in the fundamentally unnatural combination of wood and ormolu or in wood that had its colour and texture disguised by paint or gilt and plaster and multicoloured inlays.



Fig. VI. Detail of Fig. V. The marble mosaic panels are Italian.

By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Looked at in this way Adam's effects are theatrical but they are none the less logical and successful. He was not trying to emphasise the woodiness of wood or the coldness of marble but to set up the screen of civilised knowledge which separated man from the disorder of nature, so providing the proper surroundings for a gentleman of fashion. His interiors combined convenience with a knowledge of the antique in an ordered mathematical scheme. Straight lines contrasted with curves and the outlines of his designs whether for furniture or anything else were simple geometrical figures in which grotesques and classical motifs were fitted in symmetrical balance.

Even when his intellectual aims are appreciated it is still difficult to accept Adam completely. The results are in such violent contrast to anything we can produce today. A single sideboard in a museum or an elaborate cabinet like the recent purchase by the Victoria & Albert Museum may seem beautiful objects in themselves or they may seem very artificial to a generation brought up on Sloane Street off-white and Bauhaus functional.

It is difficult to realise how easily and well they fitted into the contemporary scene. A sideboard would not stand on its own but would have a complete equipment of knife boxes, urns, and a wine cooler. Flanked by pedestals it would be lit by candles, not the blue shadowless glare of a fluorescent tube. The visitor walking round Syon may think it is overdone and vulgar. The brilliant anteroom with its gilt statues and strong colour reduces a lounge suit or print dress to insignificance, but this room was for the servants to gather in. Their liveries would certainly

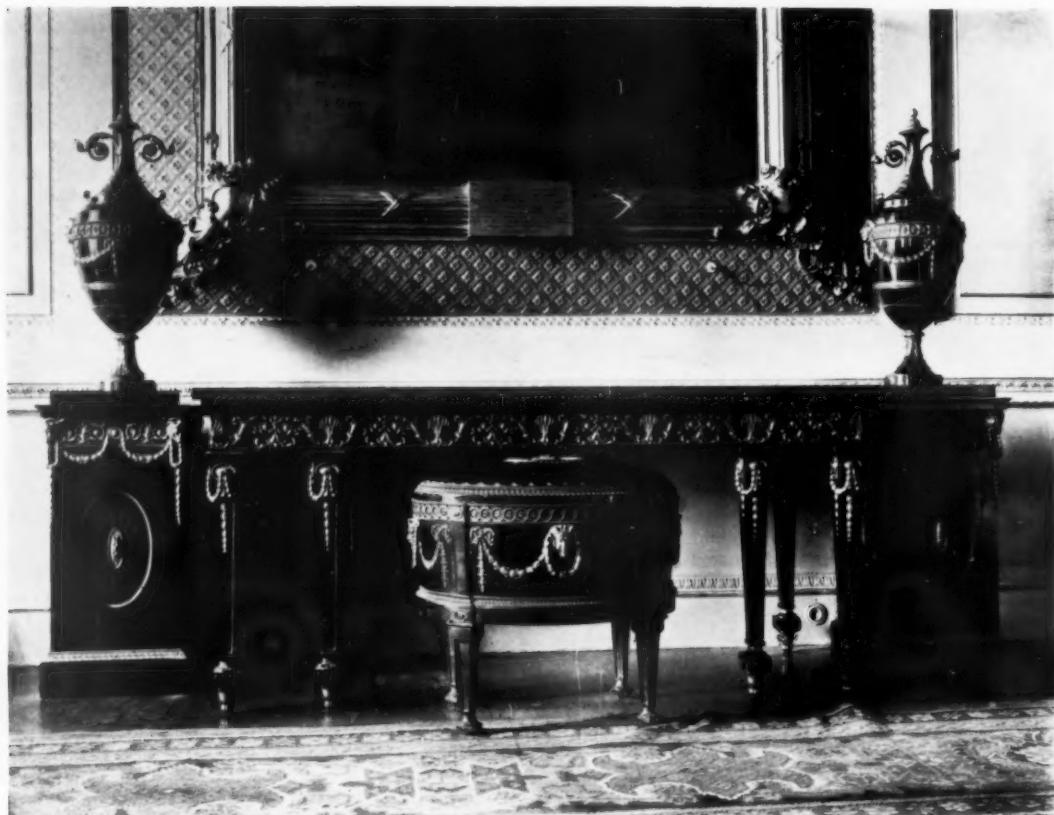


Fig. VII. Sideboard with pedestals, urns and wine cooler. Rosewood inlaid with various woods and mounted with ormolu. At Harewood House. An example of the co-operation of Robert Adam and Chippendale. Copyright "Country Life."

not be outdone by their surroundings but would complement them.

Adam's influence affected every detail of interior furnishing. Wedgwood was an outstanding example of great technical achievements in pottery manufacture which were made to serve the new taste. Matthew Boulton's ornaments in ormolu, blue spar and other materials were another by-product. An Adam mantelpiece is particularly demanding in this respect. The only *garniture* which it will support must be of the same classical elegance as itself. Paintings of XVIIth century interiors show that the mantelpiece was often left bare and had not become the repository for invitation cards, ashtrays, photographs, ornaments and souvenirs that it is now.

Door furniture also changed. There are numerous drawings in the Soane Museum to show that this detail also occupied Adam, even inkwells received his attention.

Many other architects worked in the neo-classical manner but none were such prolific designers of accessories. James Wyatt, the designer of the Pantheon, supplanted the brothers Adam in popular favour, both when working in the Adam manner and later when he adopted the Gothic taste. In both cases he was only working in a style already formed by others and he designed little furniture. Heveningham Hall is the only example of a house furnished as well as built by him.

The Gothic revival had no influence on Adam's furniture. He did design buildings in the castle style but the interiors and the furnishings differed in no way from his other houses. Culzean Castle, his best known example in this manner, shows no change at all in the style of its furniture.

It is not likely that a style of furniture so complete and elaborate as the neo-classical should persist without change. Some kinds of cottage furniture, the windsor chair for instance, are still made today. Their form has grown out of traditional methods of manufacture not from an intellectual conception of cottage life, but the Adam style had no such organic basis. It certainly left its mark on the work of designers and architects like Henry Holland as can be seen from the furniture he designed for Buckingham Palace. It was also one of the factors in the formation of the Regency style but otherwise had no individual life after the end of the XVIIth century.

Although it would be ridiculous to suggest that furniture should be made in the neo-classical style today, Adam as a designer is still a good example to follow. It was the relationship between an intelligent, knowledgeable, trained designer and a manufacturing business man that produced some of the finest XVIIIth century furniture. The same relationship today might have equally fruitful results.



## A SWEDISH CROSS IN ITALY

BY CHARLES C. OMAN

Fig. I. Cross of S. Atto, silver-gilt. Pistoia Cathedral.

IN 1949 there was held an important exhibition of examples of sacred art drawn from the churches of the diocese of Florence. In the summer of 1950 similar exhibitions were organized for the dioceses of Arezzo and Pistoia. The latter exhibition, which is well displayed in the ample halls of the Palazzo del Comune, will remain open until the end of the year. Though including sculpture, vestments and illuminated manuscripts, it is mainly remarkable for its wealth of medieval goldsmiths' work. Many visitors to Pistoia have spent a morning in the cathedral trying to puzzle out the individual contributions of the successive silversmiths who worked on the silver altar and retable in the chapel of St. James. The end of the morning usually brought a sense of frustration. Much of the retable was too high for a proper inspection and all of it was filthy. It was decided to clean it thoroughly when it was brought out of its war-time shelter, and at the exhibition it appears cleaned and re-arranged so as to illustrate the work of each silversmith. In its dismantled state every part is visible.

It is not proposed to give a detailed account of the Pistoia exhibition but to concentrate upon another treasure of the cathedral of that city, which is much less widely known than the silver altar.

In July, 1840, as Canon Gaetano Beani relates (*La Cattedrale Pistoiese. L'altare di S. Iacopo e la Sacrestia de' belli arredi*, 1903, p. 148), the monument of S. Atto was opened for authentication and in it was found a magnificent chalice of silver-gilt decorated with filigree and an altar-cross of silver-gilt. Neither piece can have belonged to the XIIth century bishop in whose grave they were found and, indeed, they can not have been in there for very long, as the cross answers the description of one which figures in an inventory of the cathedral treasures in 1649. Whereas the chalice has long been recognised as Venetian work of the XIVth century, there has been a tendency to evade labelling closely the cross (Fig. I). It appeared in the Orvieto exhibition of 1898 and was illustrated twice in the commemorative volume by R. Erculei, but the catalogue goes no further than ascribing a XIVth century date for it. The ends of the limbs of the cross are shaped as quatrefoils and have on the front cast and finely chased half figures of censing angels. Two branches support very expressive figures of the Virgin and St. John. The stem is set in a low octofoil foot, formed of two rows of openwork foliage, set with pastes and with little figures of lions and griffins. It stands about sixteen inches high.

The whole character of the cross speaks of an origin



Fig. II. Silver-gilt brooch from Badeboda. Countess of Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm.

north of the Alps, but a knowledge of the museums of Sweden is necessary for locating it more exactly. Swedish church plate of the beginning of the XIVth century is hardly less rare than English, but owing to the discovery of large hoards, we are much better informed about the domestic silver and jewellery in use in Gotland and on the Swedish mainland.

By the kind help of Mr. Carl Hernmarck of the Nationalmuseum and Mr. O. Källstrom of the Statens Historiska Museum, I am able to illustrate a very fine jewelled brooch of silver-gilt which formed part of a hoard found at Badeboda (Fig. II) in the parish of Aseda, Smaland, in the year 1887. The resemblance of its decoration of little lions and winged monsters to that on the Pistoia cross is obvious. Fortunately the Badeboda brooch does not stand alone but is only one of the finest examples of a whole group of jewellery coming from the Swedish hoards. Though it is the foot of the cross which provides the most incontrovertible evidence, it would not be difficult to find quite close parallels for the figure-sculpture in the stone sculpture of Gotland and the Swedish mainland. It is sad that we have no information how this rare and beautiful piece found its way to Tuscany.

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#### BOOK REVIEW

**ANGLO-SAXON JEWELLERY.** By RONALD JESSUP. (Faber & Faber. 42s.)

The last book on English jewellery is now thirty years old and even the specialist literature on small classes of jewellery remains quite small. A book on Anglo-Saxon jewellery written mainly for those who are not trained archeologists is especially welcome, as it will relieve this class of reader from the tedious task of disentangling the subject from general histories of pre-Conquest art and archeological treatises.

It is the tidiness of Mr. Jessup's arrangement rather than the originality of his views which will make this book so useful. The archeological material is all relegated to the lengthy explanation to the plates, leaving him free to use the eighty-four pages of the text for the general aspects of the subject. This allows him to begin with an introduction to the Anglo-Saxon way of life as a background for the discussion of the jewellery and its makers. Perhaps at this point he has not quite sufficiently emphasised the troublesome fact that so much less is known about the jewellery of the Christian Anglo-Saxons than of their pagan ancestors, thanks to the custom of the latter of burying their notables fully equipped. The jewellery is arranged according to how it was worn on the body, which has often to be decided by the position in which they are found in the graves of the pagan period. Thus the curious chained silver spoons were worn at a woman's belt, presumably as a badge of office. The use to which some of the pieces of later date were put, such as the Alfred Jewel, remains quite uncertain.

Mr. Jessup has to admit that practically nothing is known about the Anglo-Saxon jeweller. He gives us, however, an excellent account of the extensive range of techniques which they used and whence they obtained their materials. Perhaps he rather overstates the oddity

of the fact that few jewellers' tools have been recognised. After all, scrap has always been valuable, and tools used in the later Middle Ages are no more easy to come by. Mr. Jessup has imbibed Mr. Kendrick's interest in the history of archeology and concludes his study with a review of the early excavators and collectors of Anglo-Saxon remains.

It only remains to add that the four coloured and forty monochrome plates are well up to the high standard of this series.

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#### COVER PLATE

Chardin's *Scullery Maid* (*l'Ecurieuse*), one of a wonderful pair of pictures which belong to the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow University, is justly a favourite among all his delightful works. It has everything of Chardin in it: his simple acceptance of the ordinary as a subject for art; his monumental design even in a picture which measures less than 18 x 15 inches; his solidity of painting; his ability to give the objects on a canvas three-dimensional values; his understanding of the way that light and colour reflected from object to object so that the whole is a symphony of interrelated light; and, not least, that emotion, that sentiment, which he believed to be so great a part of an artist's essentials.

"And who told you, Sir, that one paints with colours? One makes use of colours, but one paints with the emotions."

His classic reply to an artist over-anxious about colours is a key to his art.

Nevertheless, his technical achievement anticipated the "discoveries" of Manet, of the Impressionists, of Cézanne. All of this is inherent in this picture. It was painted about 1739 and shown in the Salon that year, at the height of his genius with this type of subject. This version, however, was exhibited by him in 1757. The model, with her quaint profile and slightly receding double chin, appears in several of the works of this period. Always he paints her with that unselfconscious and unposed grace, as though he were the unseen observer of her simple domestic doings. But there is perfect art as well as perfect realism here, and the related shapes of the things around her are the prophecy of the great series of *Still Lifes* which were to come a decade later and occupy the last years of his life. The brothers John and William Hunter, the Scottish surgeons, were among those who bought from Chardin his work, and so these fine examples were secured for Glasgow.

## A ROGUES' GALLERY OF CONTINENTAL SOFT PASTE PORCELAIN

BY WILFRED J. SAINSBURY

MANY collectors, when they have bought a "wrong 'un," like to get rid of it as soon as possible, because its presence irks them with its reminder of their fallibility. This seems a mistake to the writer. A fake often has high artistic merit, and, like a caricature, may draw attention to certain characteristics of the genuine original by exaggerating them. Furthermore, most of us continue to make mistakes: the wisest of us can only say that we make new mistakes, and do not go on repeating the old ones, and it is good for our souls to be reminded of our past errors. We should all remember the story of Willegis, a mediaeval Archbishop of Mainz, who had sprung from a lowly origin. He employed a friend of his youth to stand behind his seat at feasts and great occasions, and, at the least sign of pomposity on the part of the Archbishop, to whisper in his ear this rhyme:

"Willegis, Willegis,  
Denk wo du kommen bis,"

which may be translated into English verse of about equal artistic merit, as:

"Willikin, Willikin,  
Think of your origin."

A fake should, strictly, have been made for the purpose of deception. Many candidates for inclusion in a Rogues' Gallery, however, were made in the first



Fig. II. Fake Chantilly scent bottle, with red hunting horn mark. A commercial product, quite often found. Note two of the characteristic features of true Chantilly products of the *décor coréen* style, namely the bamboo hedge (*décor à la haie*) the squirrel eating a nut (*décor à l'écureuil*).



Fig. I. Fake Chantilly plate, with blue hunting horn mark. Ground base is a splendid smooth yellow, and the gilding is lightly tooled. Perhaps painted in Brussels around 1830 by the same hand as painted Fig. IV.

instance in all innocence—frequently to replace a broken piece in a set—if the interlaced l's of Sèvres, or the hunting horn of Chantilly, were put on it, this was done at the request of the buyer. In such cases there was "no deception, gentlemen," no fake, and no criminal act in accordance with the principle of the English Common Law, that *non est reum, nisi mens sit rea*. Nevertheless, such pieces can, in the course of time, become charming candidates for our Gallery.

Fig. III. On the left is a redecorated Arras saucer: the genuine Arras cache-pot on the right shows what was probably the original decoration. The blue of the saucer is a deep colour, with light patches, presumably intended to imitate lapis.



Fig. IV. A fake Tournay cup and saucer, perhaps painted by the same hand as Fig. I. The ground colour is a light yellow, with occasional streaks of a darker, almost orange colour. The mark is the Tournay crossed swords, with four crosses, in gold.

Fakes generally spring from two sources. A genuine piece, originally undecorated or lightly decorated, can be redecorated or over decorated (French, *sur décoré*) in order to make it more elaborate and so of greater value: or it may have been made from new materials. We shall find both classes in this article.

Figure I shows what purports to be a Chantilly plate. It is a glorious piece of work, and unsophisticated visitors, going round the author's collection, often single it out for their admiration. In fact, such a yellow was never used at Chantilly in such quantity, nor was gilding; and in the best days of Rococo art, one would seldom, if ever, have found a square reserve in a circular plate. The paste itself, by transmitted light, is white, and has not got the greenish-yellow tinge which is found in Chantilly. It has a "suspension hole" at the back, whereas Chantilly plates were seldom or never so suspended.

It is quite clear that this was not decorated at Chantilly, and indeed, was never made there. It is believed that it was decorated in Brussels around 1830, and as the plate is of soft paste, it was perhaps made at Tournay. Between 1 o'clock and 2 o'clock near the rim, are some black specks, which may have got there in the baking after redecoration.

Figure II shows a fake Chantilly scent bottle. The flowers are in the Chantilly-Oriental style and there are

Fig. V. A large teapot (fully 6 in. across) in the Sèvres style. Mark—the interlaced I's of Sèvres and the incised C.D. of Coalbrookdale (Coalport). As it bears the Coalport mark, it is not a fake.



two of the most characteristic features of such decoration. The colours are nearly right, but have not the delicacy of the original palette, and the decoration itself is too "crowded." The glaze is fine creamy and lustrous, and obviously made with a lead base. In fact, however, Chantilly products of the red hunting horn period were covered with a tin glaze, which has a "thinner" appearance than a lead glaze, and the red mark was doubtless employed because of the higher value attaching to articles of that early period.

Figure III shows a redecorated Arras saucer on the left. On the right is a genuine Arras cache-pot with what was probably the original style of decoration—a light and simple distribution of colour, well suited to have more elaborate additions. The gilding is lightly tooled. The general effect is one of great richness. Underneath is the mark A R in blue. This, at least, is probably genuine. Such redecorated Arras pieces are fairly common, and sometimes, by strong transmitted light, one can see the original decoration underneath the addition. Unfortunately this is not possible in this case.

Figure IV is a "Tournay" cup and saucer. In the reserves are landscapes with classical ruins. The faker quite sensibly used the best and most expensive mark—it cost him no more than any other. The pieces have great charm (though the handle is rather big for the size of the cup), but the colour and decoration are foreign to Tournay. The decorator may be the same as for the "Chantilly" plate, shown in Figure I.

The teapot in Figure V is not truly a fake at all. It is of considerable interest as showing the excellent quality work of which Coalport was capable. The potting is first rate, and the decoration of high quality. Sèvres, probably, would not have put on such a feeble handle, or so clumsy a top, but in spite of these defects it is a handsome piece.

Perhaps enough has been said to prove that a Rogues' Gallery should occupy a part of every collector's *vitrines*, because of the frequent beauty of the contents and the instruction that can be derived from their study. And this collector, at least, is sure that his Rogues' Gallery will grow with his collection, and all he can hope for is that he will not have any duplicate pieces!



# POLYNESIAN ART

BY KEN WEBSTER

IT is curious that so much work of great artistic significance is still, for many people, condemned unseen and unconsidered. The term "native curios" is the damning phrase—that useful, loosely used and much-abused auction room description, applied to nearly everything not of Western or European make. Only the great works of the Mediterranean civilisations and the treasures of the Far East escape this term of inconsequential patronage, if not of contempt. A curio, a curiosity, hardly suggests the work of an artist. Nor does, in fact, that less familiar, ungainly word, the scientific "artifact." No artist or craftsman ever fashioned the transient visions of his wondering soul into either a "curio" or an "artifact."

One may well ask here . . . what is art? Is it something, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder? And that might be as good an explanation as any, but only he who has special interest or training can discern what is art and what is merely something made by a workman or craftsman. Appreciation of art, like the creation of art, must be learned: the conventions of the medium; the how and why of the fitness of things; discernment of the mastery, if not the mastery itself, of technique. These are some of the elements of the business which are learned firstly by the artist himself, so that the vision in his mind may be translated faithfully and unerringly into enduring substance. And he who would find pleasure in beholding must learn some-



Fig. I (a) *Wahaika*. Fighting weapon in hardwood. (b) *Auika*. Needle in human bone for stringing fish. Webster Collection.



Fig. II. Maori rafter-pattern. Drawn by Maj.-Gen. H. G. Robley. Two Maori whalebone fighting weapons, *kotiate* and *patu paraoa*. Webster Collection.

thing too of the mechanics of the thing, although to teach that is far beyond the scope of this essay.

Just as the great masters of the Old World learned to wed skill and genius, so those peoples, whom the Old World was for long pleased to call savages, learned, one generation from another, pupil from master, to create in wood, stone, ivory and bone those objects that we, belatedly, have recognised as veritable works of art. It may be argued that, if these things are such striking pieces of art-workmanship, how comes it that they have for so long been unrecognised? The Pacific has been opened up for two centuries and the arts and manufactures of its peoples known for almost as long. And yet, only in the last thirty years or so have the finer products of these peoples been sought by the discerning collector of fine art and not only by the ethnologist.

Admittedly, it is difficult to give a really convincing answer because likes and dislikes in art are violently opposed and unyielding. One man demands that what he sees be a faithful portrayal of nature: distortions in representation to him reveal a distorted mind. The opposite camp would seem vehemently to eschew all that is orderly and natural and so compose their work that all but the "initiates" might look in vain for a semblance of reason. But perhaps the deliberately distorted and grotesque of the primitive artist is explainable to the satisfaction of all. We of the Old World and Western cultures have long been largely materialistic in our appreciation of natural phenomena. Growth of scientific reasoning has affected every phase of our life. The "savage" had not this advantage. He lived in a world hedged about with fears and taboos. The drifting mists were the abode of mischievous sprites; the gloomy forest depths concealed dread monsters, and unspeakable terrors lurked in the quaking darkness of the



Fig. III. Wooden head from a Maori stockade post. Eyes inset with *Haliotis* shell. Maori fish-hooks. Webster Collection.



Fig. IV (left, below). Maori *toki pou tangata*, or ceremonial adze handle in hard-wood.

Fig. V (above, left). Tangaroa, the Polynesian god of the sea. Courtesy of the British Museum.

Fig. VI (above, right). Wooden figure from Hawaii. Courtesy of the British Museum.

Fig. VII (below, right). Maori *heitiki* neck ornament in nephrite. Webster Collection.

Fig. VIII (below, centre). Whale ivory figures from Tonga. Courtesy of British Museum.



## POLYNESIAN ART

light. These peoples were as children and they had the child's ability to create from their imaginings very real and powerful beings or "presences" whose abiding places might be no more than trees or stones, things that became focal points for forces good or evil. And when a conscious representation, or effigy, of one of these beings or forces was made, it was made, not in purely natural form, but embodying those conceptions of terror, those fears of the unknown which have ever chilled the hearts of men. These effigies represented an idea in the imagination, not a portrayal of natural form.

If we reflect, are we, ourselves, so far removed from those ideas? How long is it since the art of the fairy-tale was a popular pastime in Europe? It was nothing unreasonable to adult hearers that the characters in these tales surmounted all the laws of nature, were often endowed with appalling mental and physical distortions and lived in seemingly indestructible perpetuity. If, then, we translate this quality of human imagination into another realm of art, is it strange that the product of the simpler and less sophisticated thought processes should be something outside the bounds of what we consider natural and reasonable? It is only when we understand the background of the Polynesian's life that we can appreciate fully the power and complete fitness of his art expressed in form and design. And when we consider that nowhere in the many-isled Pacific, where dwelt the Polynesian race, was any form of metal used prior to the advent of Captain Cook in the XVIIth century, then we can but wonder the more that materials so intractable as ivory, jade, hardwoods, stone and bone were fashioned so well into works of such excellence, and in many cases, of exquisite delicacy and fineness.

Here it may be well to digress and say that not everything that has come from the Pacific in the past century and a half is a work of art. Rather is it so that a great mass of material is anything but art. The explanation of this is here. With the coming of Europeans into the seclusion of the Pacific came the influences that were to destroy for ever cultures based on a highly developed religious and social system with its attendant laws of *tapu* which governed every aspect of these people's lives. Let us consider the case of the Maori, and his case shall answer for the whole Polynesian people.

Under the influence, and on the direction of, the *tohunga*, the priestly expert on all things, spiritual and temporal, the old-time Maori went his way and deviated not a whit from the customs of those forbears who had brought the nation from the legendary homeland of Hawaiki. In chant, in legend, song and carving the rule of law held. Even the wonderful freedom of Maori designs developed within the limits of rigid convention. And withal, the Maori, probably by the instinct inherent from long generations of careful training, saw to it that all that he made, however humble, was pleasing to the eye. Even though the weapon, implement or utensil had no carved design other than its own utilitarian form, it was a pleasing form and in use came aptly to the hand. How grievous was the ruin of this feeling for beauty when the whole basis of the Maori's former life was shattered by impact with Europeans. Missionary teaching, however



Fig. IX. Ancestral figures from Easter Island. Oldman Collection. Courtesy of the High Commissioner for New Zealand.

well-meant, and the pleasures and vices of Western living introduced by whalers and sailors—these latter two types a culture contact unlikely to promote fine aspirations—introduced a new set of standards of value. Muskets, gunpowder, tobacco, spirits: these and other importations of the white man were the new currency. And when the Maori found that those things which formerly he had made with skill and possessed with pride were eagerly sought by the stranger and were a ready means of exchange for the stranger's iron tools and firearms, then the end of the old order was in sight. As the supply of his stone-age manufactures gave out before the demands of collectors and curio-hunters, the Maori, no longer tied by the teachings and restrictions of the now discredited *tohunga*, quickly saw to it that the demand was met by new manufactures. Because a carved object was more desired than a plain one and because the iron tools cut the hardwoods more readily than the former flints, jades and shells, these new creations were too often over-carved monstrosities, based on the old forms but lacking the restraint and elegance of the old-time artist. Within sixty years of Cook's re-discovery of New Zealand the old inspiration had almost gone, except from the minds of the older generation who held fast to the faith but whose rapidly diminishing authority stayed little the encroaching tide of European customs and standards of value. So it was that the iconoclastic missionary and the layman, who cared not and realised nothing of these savage arts, destroyed for ever the artistic genius of a whole nation in less than a century. For however ardently enthusiasts to-day may seek to revive Maori arts the plan cannot but fail to be realized fully. It may not be beyond the skill of a surgeon to put together again a body that has been dismembered so that in all its parts it is whole and articulate: "bone to his bone and with sinews laid

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upon them." But where is the human skill that can recreate in the body the breath of life and virile consciousness of being?

Most who have visited a museum have seen, at some time, something of "native art" from one of the more primitive parts of the world. The material on display is never shown in anything of the atmosphere in which it was created. The mask or fetish figure designed to impart dread in the dancing fire-riven shadows of a forest-girt village, loses much of its power when hung nakedly against the cold background of a museum wall. It was never conceived in such surroundings and so we, who cannot hope to see these things where they rightly belong, must make our imaginations work for us and create a background in our mind's eye against which we can place the object we are considering. Listen to this description by an early traveller into the Urewera Country, that bush-girt fastness of the Maori in the North Island of New Zealand. It was written in 1841 by William Colenso in his diary and later told through the *Transactions of The New Zealand Institute* (Vol. 27). He describes his approach to a fortified village on a headland overlooking Lake Waikaremoana:

"The gateway was, as is often the case, embellished with a pair of huge and boldly-carved human figures, besmeared with shining red pigment, armed with spears, and grinning defiance to all comers. These were not only seen to advantage through being elevated above the horizon, but their eyes (or rather sockets) instead of being set with glittering *Haliotis* shell (according to the usual national custom), were left open, so that the light of the sky streamed through them, and this was yet more particularly manifested owing to the proper inclination given to the figures, looking down, as it were, on all toiling up the narrow, steep ascent into the well-fenced village."

Here is evidenced a sense of dramatic fitness, of deliberate and well-chosen effect. The Maori builders of the village knew how effective would be these defiant effigies so placed, but no modern surroundings can recapture for the beholder such an effect.

Obviously, not everything could have the dramatic qualities of a well-sited effigy. Some things are pleasing because they are pleasing design, an harmonious whole. Look at the *auika* illustrated in Fig. I (b). This is a species of needle in human bone, used for stringing fish on to a cord. It would be hard to devise a more pleasing design with which to decorate so utilitarian an object. The flat mask with its inlaid shell eye at the cord end gives added vigour. The same pleasing rhythm is seen in the rafter-pattern in Fig. II. These designs were drawn in many variations of the one theme and were usually painted in dark red, black and white.

The Maori, of all the Polynesian peoples, excelled in the use of the curve and spiral. His weapons were usually symmetrical shapes in wood, bone, stone and jade. Three examples can be seen in Figs. I and II. The hand-club in Fig. I has a small figure carved in high relief above the hand-grip, well balancing the swell of the striking edge opposite. The two specimens in Fig. II, against which the rafter-pattern is shown, are well-made examples in whale-bone wherein symmetry and balance are again evident. In Fig. III is the finely-wrought curve of a wooden shark-hook with its barb of human bone, and the two small hooks, one in bone and one in shell, show

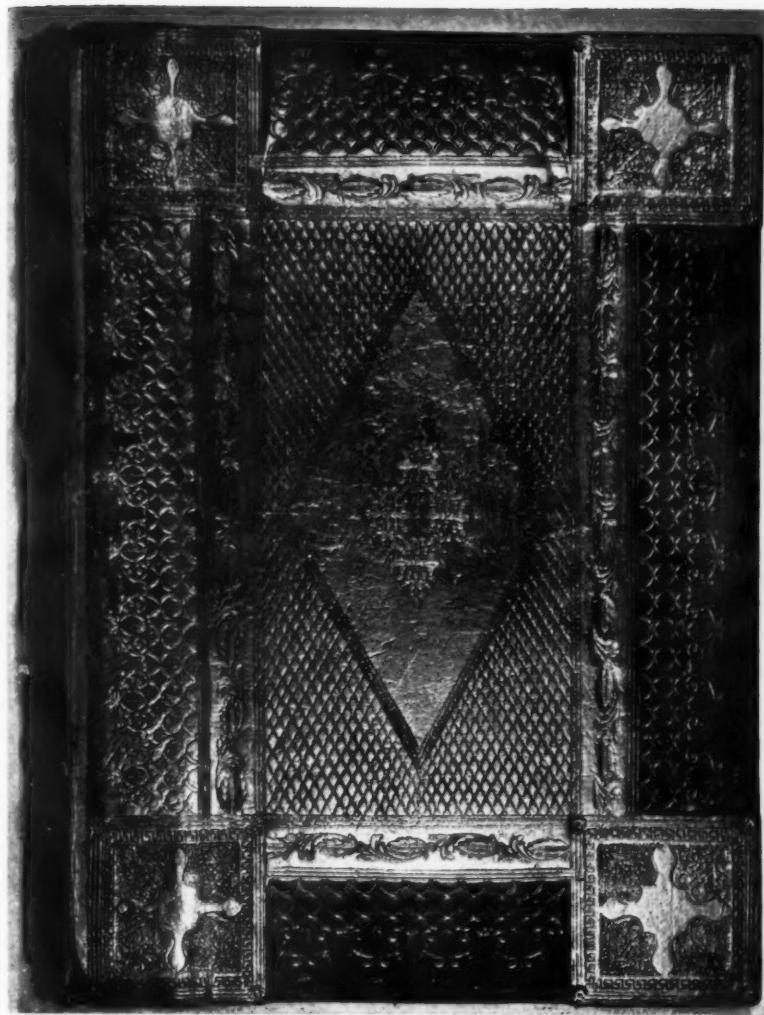
again well-proportioned curves. This use of curved contour was applied to most of the articles that the Maori made for daily use and for all forms of decoration.

It was in the representation of the human figure that all Polynesian peoples really showed their artistic ingenuity, and, I think, often evidenced that sense of fun that is so characteristic of the Polynesian race. Look at Fig. V. Can one doubt that the creator of this image really enjoyed doing it? The subject was, no doubt, deadly serious but the artist has let a lively sense of fun direct his work. I can think of no closer parallel to this piece than the front cover of *Punch* with its tumbling elfin figures. Fig. VI gives some idea of the menace that could be conveyed, and there is a grim, unearthly stare from the Easter Island ancestral figures in Fig. IX.

Let us, therefore, judge the works of these people with a sympathetic understanding of their former life, and in appreciating their art, not measure it against what in past days has meant "art" for us. Let us feel, with these simpler peoples, a little of the awe of the unknown and humility before the unknowable. The judgment of future centuries may be that we, who have striven so long to mimic the visible world of nature in our artistic portrayals, are, at best, but stuffy imitators, and that those who took darkness and light, space and time, and fashioned from them the limitless imaginings of the mind are the true portrayers of man's thoughts in visible and tangible form.



Fig. X. Maori bone-chest. Hollowed-out effigy for holding bones of a chief. Carving done before the arrival of Cook in N.Z. Courtesy of Dr. Gilbert Archey, Director, Auckland Museum, N.Z.



## Aberdeen Corner-Square Bindings

BY  
WILLIAM S. MITCHELL

Fig. I. Binding by A. Brown  
between 1793 and 1818.

THE recent purchase by Aberdeen University Library of the locally-executed binding illustrated in Fig. I led to an investigation of eight other bindings in the same style already in the possession of the Library, through which it was discovered that all were produced in Aberdeen at various dates between the end of the XVIIth century and 1928. So unusual is this recent acquisition, only one other comparable binding being so far recorded, that some consideration of the style would seem of interest to bibliophiles.

The binding is on a copy of Thomson's *The Seasons* printed in Perth by R. Morison, jr., for R. Morison & Son in 1793. The leather is brown calf (russia) over wooden boards which are bevelled on the three outer sides so as to throw into relief a square at each corner. The binding measures 237 x 172 mm. and the side of each corner square measures approximately 48 mm. The decoration, which is in blind tooling, consists of: on the bevels, ornament formed by repeated applications of a tool consisting of a circle with a half-circle above

and below, surmounted by conventional ornament; each corner bears a right-angled floral tool repeated four times and surrounded by a narrow Greek key fillet and a two-line fillet; framing the centre panel is a flowing foliage roll; in the centre of the panel is a lozenge-shaped leaf ornament repeated four times, while most of the panel is filled by repeated applications of a single-line fillet about 3 mm. apart. The spine is divided into five compartments by alternately wide and narrow false bands decorated by the circle-and-semicircle tool and short diagonal lines respectively; the compartments are filled by the lozenge-shaped tool already mentioned flanked by leaf ornaments, with the exception of the centre compartment in which is the word "Seasons," in Gothic type, in gold. The inside of both boards is framed by a roll-produced shell ornament and an inner gilt fillet with the right-angled tool at each corner; within this frame on a calf panel is an ink drawing of a rural dancing scene (upper) and what may be the triumph of Flora (lower). The flyleaves are of brown paper and



Fig. II. Binding by  
J. Philip, 1839.

each bears, on the inner side facing the doublures, a label with the words "Bound and sold by A. Brown, Bookseller, Aberdeen." The hinges bear evidence of having been at some time skilfully repaired.

Alexander Brown, the bookseller mentioned, was in business in Aberdeen by 1795 when he issued a catalogue of his circulating library in Broad Street. This, and two auction catalogues which he issued in 1806 and 1807, are in the Library at King's College. By 1818 the firm, which published Kennedy's *Annals of Aberdeen* in that year, had become A. Brown & Co.; this binding must therefore have been produced between 1793 and 1818. The firm survived under the latter name until as late as 1915, but not as bookbinders, as will be seen. The name of A. Brown does not appear in the catalogue of the signed bindings in the Schiff collection, nor in

any of the usual works of reference on bookbindings.

There are in Aberdeen University Library seven volumes bound or, in one case, repaired by "J. Philip, Binder, Queen Street, Aberdeen," one bearing the date June, 1834, while another can be dated 1839, and these are in the same style as the A. Brown binding.

John Philip was already in business as a bookbinder in Queen Street in 1825-26, as his name appears in the first Aberdeen Directory, issued in that year. The last appearance of his name is in 1846-7 and in the following Directory John Edmond, bookbinder and stationer at the same address is "Successor to J. Philip & Co." The firm later became Edmond & Spark, under which name the business is still carried on at the same address by Mr. Douglas McD. Philip.

John Philip's bindings are in the same style as that

ABERDEEN CORNER-SQUARE BINDINGS



Fig. III (on left). Binding by J. Philip, c. 1834.



Fig. IV (on right). Binding by Edmond & Spark, 1928.

by A. Brown, calf or sheepskin on wooden boards with a square at each corner thrown into relief by wide and shallow bevelling on the three outer edges. The decoration, which is in gold in only one instance, is elaborate, being made up of single leaf or flower tools, repeated on the bevelling, and other—usually floral—tools in the corners, with roll tooling framing the centre panel and in some cases as dentelles on the larger books.

The only date in the series is on a very elaborate binding in brown calf on wooden boards, decorated in blind, on the *Liber Epistolaris* of St. Jerome, printed in Mainz by Peter Schoeffer in 1470, No. 1 of the Library's incunabula. This, which measures 442 x 310 mm., has conventional floral or foliage tools in the corners, on the bevels and the inner margin. The corners are joined by a narrow foliage roll framed by a three-line fillet which also surrounds the squares. The centre panel is framed by a series of rolls and fillets of which the most prominent is a wider foliage roll, 9 mm. wide. The dentelle is of a roll-produced ornament of an acanthus-like foliage roll of apparently Greek inspiration. On the lower dentelle on the upper cover are the words, "Rebound by J. Philip Abdn. June 1834." The acanthus roll appears in gold on the outer edges of the squares. The edges are gilt and there are the remains of two clasps, the catch having been on the lower cover.

Another extremely handsome binding by J. Philip is on the original minute book of the Spalding Club (Fig. II), on which the decoration is entirely in gold. This was first used in December, 1839, and the paper of which the volume is made up is watermarked 1839, so it can be assumed that the binding was done in that year. The volume is a thick quarto measuring 282 x 220 mm., and is bound in reddish brown calf on wooden boards; there are five bands. The square corners have a double circle in the centre surrounded by conventional ornaments; the bevels and the inner margin are filled in the usual manner by floral ornaments with a floral roll on the inner side. A three-line fillet is used as a

frame for the corners and the roll. The centre panel is decorated by a large floral ornament at each corner joined by an indented fillet, all framed by a two-line fillet. The endpapers are of marbled paper, and the dentelles are of a flowing foliage roll. In the lower left-hand corner of the inner side of the lower cover are the words, "Bound by J. Philip, Aberdeen." The second compartment of the spine bears the words "Minute Book of the Spalding Club"; the other compartments are filled with flowing line ornaments, and at the foot are the words "Instituted/ 23 December 1839."

To the same period (c. 1824-47) belong four other bindings bound in the same style by J. Philip, of which the finest is that shown in Fig. III. This covers three of the Library's incunabula, Nos. 158, 159 and 160, and may date from 1834, since the endpapers are of the same marbled paper as used in the Mainz St. Jerome already mentioned. The leather is brown calf on wooden boards; there are four bands and the tooling is in blind. Floral tools of the usual type cover the bevels and the inner margin, while the corner squares are filled with similar tools; a narrow flowing foliage roll joins the squares and the centre panel is framed by a conventional floral roll. The acanthus roll is used on the dentelles and the edges.

No. 31 of the incunabula, probably bound by Patrick Lowes, the XVth century Edinburgh binder,<sup>1</sup> has been repaired in the same style, also by J. Philip, whose stamp "J. Philip/ Binder/ Queen Street/ Aberdeen," appears on the lower cover. The original leather panels have been remounted on this binding, and the edges bevelled and tooled in the usual way.

The last binding in this style appears to have been done in 1928, when Mr. William Marr, foreman of Messrs. Edmond & Spark, rebound the Library's copy of the *editio princeps* (Lyon, 1504) of the *Practica* of Alexander of Tralles (Fig. IV). The only differences between this and the other examples are that the bevelling is shallower, the boards thinner (5 mm.) and a large panel

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stamp of strapwork has been used to decorate the centre panel. Mr. Marr, who is now eighty-five years of age, believes that he bound the volume in this particular style through seeing a pattern, no doubt one of the other volumes mentioned here.

Sometime during the early years of the present century another firm of bookbinders in Aberdeen, Messrs. William Jackson Ltd., bound an early edition of the Bible (London, 1580) in the same style. In this example the bevelling on the sides is somewhat steeper and the corner squares are proportionately smaller, but the general effect is the same.

So far as I am aware, the only other binding comparable in style to these Aberdeen bindings is in the collection of Major J. R. Abbey, illustrated as No. 107 in the catalogue of his collection.<sup>2</sup> This was bound in London about 1810 by Thomas Gosden, sportsman, antiquary and bookbinder, and has a square at the outer corners only, while the bevelling on the outer margin is interrupted in the centre for about one inch, and the inner edge of the boards is bevelled.

It is difficult to see what connection there could be between this London binding of 1810 and the Aberdeen binding by Alexander Brown of about the same date.

Up to the present the binding by Alexander Brown described here is the only one known bearing his label, and it appears that A. Brown & Co., as distinct from A. Brown, while describing themselves as bookbinders, were not. For the present investigation Mr. Philip, of Messrs. Edmond & Spark, kindly lent me a pattern book of ornaments, rolls and type used by J. Philip and later by John Edmond (afterwards Edmond & Spark) from 1825 onwards. Among the impressions is one of a small label bearing the words "Bound by A. Brown & Co. Aberdeen." Furthermore, in a private collection in Aberdeen, which I have been permitted to examine, there are three volumes of Carlyle's *French Revolution* bound in polished calf as a University prize in 1868 and signed "A. Brown & Co., Aberdeen." In spite of this, a star-shaped or snowflake ornament in the compartments of the spine and a fillet on the covers are both in this pattern book. Most of the rolls and fillets—44 in number—and many of the tools are still owned by Messrs. Edmond & Spark. Among the latter is a circle and semicircles tool very similar to that used on the A. Brown binding, but it is not distinctive enough for one to say that it is the same, and as none of the other tools on the Brown binding are to be found in the pattern book, no inference can be drawn as to the possibility of tools passing from Brown to Philip.

The chronology of this group of bindings and the materials used deserve comment. There seems little doubt that Alexander Brown was the first to introduce the fashion into Aberdeen, since he must have executed the binding bearing his name before 1818. With the exception of the two recent bindings the others are by John Philip and were executed between 1824 and 1847, in which year he was succeeded by John Edmond. No bindings by Edmond or Edmond & Spark, except that mentioned here, have yet been found in this style. There seems no adequate reason to explain its adoption; it appears to have little in common with anything that went before, unless it be the typical German or rather Saxon binding of the XVIth century on which the three outer edges were slightly bevelled. But I very much

doubt whether Brown knew of this type of binding.

The use of wooden boards on all of these bindings is noteworthy, as it probably represents the last appearance of wooden boards in Europe, except as a deliberate piece of antiquarianism. On such bindings, with their shallow bevelling, wooden boards are a necessity, as the bevelling could not be done on pulp or mill boards. In using such boards these various binders are unconsciously harking back to the practice of the earliest Aberdeen bookbinder whose work can be identified. This was Francis Van Hagen, who apparently came to Aberdeen from Edinburgh and who was at work here by 1626. Of 104 examples of his work at present known, 94 are on wooden boards, even by his time an anachronism, especially on octavos and smaller books. The smallest of the present group of bindings, not described here in detail, measures 168 x 102 mm., and the boards are 4 mm. thick.

The use of such boards gives these bindings one of their less agreeable qualities—heaviness, artistically as well as literally. The boards on the Brown binding are no less than 9 mm. thick, and the average of the others is 6 or 7 mm. An unfortunate effect of this is that the hinges are weak, since in most cases the cords are not laced through the boards and the full weight of the boards is on the leather; most show signs of wear.

With the exception of the Jackson binding, which is in poor quality calf, the leather on these bindings is of excellent quality. One or two show signs of rubbing on the bands and at the corners, and one, not described above, shows signs of degeneration through the tools having been used when too hot, but in general these bindings show few signs of wear.

The conservatism of bookbinders, seen in the use of the same tools and rolls over a period of a century, has led to the persistence of a style which is apparently peculiar to Aberdeen, and these square-cornered bindings here described form an interesting chapter in the still incomplete story of Scottish bookbinding.

### Addendum.

After the typescript of the above article was in the hands of the Editor, a chance reference to a local periodical entitled *Brown's Bookstall* (1892-1913) put me on the track of further information regarding Alexander Brown. He was born in 1766, being the third son of the Rev. William Brown, Secession minister of Craigdam in Aberdeenshire. After a short apprenticeship, he set up in business as a bookseller in 1785 in the Upper-kirkgate of Aberdeen, moving to "Homer's Head" in Broad Street in 1793. In 1795 he married Catherine, daughter of James Chalmers, printer. He took his son William and an assistant into partnership as A. Brown and Co. in 1814; the binding referred to must therefore have been bound before this date. The firm moved to premises in Union Street in 1831, and Alexander Brown died in 1848. For many years he had been interested in municipal affairs and was Provost of Aberdeen in 1822-23 and 1826-27. Brown was primarily a bookseller, not a bookbinder, and it seems probable that the "A. Brown" binding was executed for him, and not by him personally.

<sup>1</sup>Menzies, W. B. *Some Early Bookbindings in the Aberdeen University Library*. Aberdeen Univ. Review, XXV, 1937-8, p. 219 and pl. IV.

<sup>2</sup>English Bindings 1490-1940 in the Library of J. R. Abbey, edited by G. D. Hobson. Privately printed at the Chiswick Press, London, 1940.

## Small Pictures for the Small Home

BY JACK GILBEY



Fig. I. DOMINIQUE SERRES, 1719-1793. Seascape. On panel, 14½ in. x 10 in.

IN the old days it was easy to display fine paintings in the large halls and living-rooms; it is a much more difficult matter to show them to advantage in smaller rooms and narrow passages often dimly lit.

Therefore smaller pictures, like smaller furniture, are

A marine painter whose work is readily snapped up when offered for re-sale is Dominique Count de Serres, 1719-1793. But though born in France and therefore a Frenchman, so great was his love for England, where so much of his time was spent and so many of his best paintings executed, and so deep was his loyalty to the Crown, that we might almost claim him as one of our own painters. As a proof of his great loyalty towards the English Sovereign it is related of him that he always hoisted the English flag when he knew the King was passing on his way to or from Windsor, and George III always used to look out for the flag, and frequently observed: "There is honest Dominique's signal flying."

The small painting illustrated here (Fig. I) is one of a pair and is painted on a panel which measures 14½ in. by 10 in. It is signed and dated 1760. It portrays a peaceful seascape in pleasant sombre tones of blue, grey and brown, with the red, white and blue of the flag of the Netherlands at the mastheads which give here and there a little bright relief.

Philip Reinagle, R.A., 1749-1833, is of course well-known as a painter of sporting pictures.

In an attractive catalogue of old English sporting prints compiled by V. P. Sabin in 1933, some interesting sporting prints are listed by this artist from originals that seem to have been painted between the years 1806 and 1808. This does not include "Black Game," which is the subject of Fig. II. However, Frank Siltzer, in his list of engraved works, gives "Black Game" engraved by F. C. Lewis, 1807-1810, so that it looks as if my original canvas, which measures 20 in. by 17½ in., has been reproduced, but so far I have not seen a copy myself.



Fig. II. PHILIP REINAGLE, 1749-1833.  
"Black Game." Canvas, 20 in. x 17½ in.

in demand at the present time. But good examples are not always easy to come by.

I was talking not long ago to a picture dealer who was telling me how short was the supply of good fishing and seascape paintings. Sea pictures will always be very popular with Englishmen, for our lives and fortunes have always been bound up with the sea.

## A P O L L O



Fig. III. GEORGE TOWNLEY  
STUBBS,  
1756-1815.  
Portrait of Mambrino. Water-colour,  
6 in. x 4½ in.

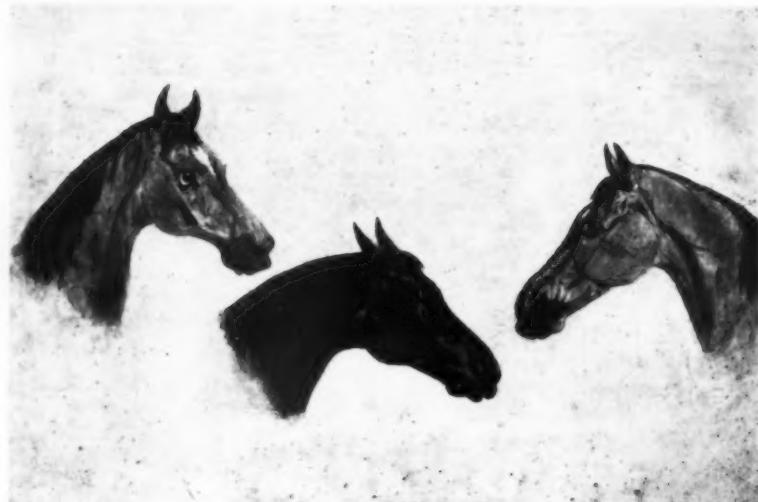
Fig. IV. JOHN FERNELEY,  
1782-1860.  
Portrait of Three Horses' Heads. Canvas,  
20 in. x 14 in.

Fig. V. HENRY ALKEN,  
1785-1851.  
Fox Hunting—Full Cry. Water-colour,  
13½ in. x 9½ in.

In the next illustration (Fig. III), we really do come down to small pictures with a vengeance, as the original water-colour drawing measures but 6 in. by 4½ in., and with its half-inch old gilt frame would not look out of place in a fair-sized doll's house.

It was some time before I found out on good authority that this is the work of George Townley Stubbs, 1756-1815, and that the signature Geo. T., the initials of his Christian names, was a method he adopted in signing many of his pictures. He copied occasionally from the works of his illustrious father and it is probable, as the dates make it possible, that this well-drawn little picture represents Mambrino, foaled in the year 1768, by Engineer out of a Cade mare.

The work of John Ferneley, R.A., 1782-1860, is already too well known to require any elaboration on my part,



but as most better-known examples of his paintings are usually of large canvases it is interesting to look at a finished work of small dimensions.

The painting, Fig. IV, which measures 20 in. by 14 in., came to me from Denis Aldridge, the secretary of the Quorn, so that it emanates from Leicestershire, the county in which Ferneley was born. It depicts the carefully painted heads of three hunters and would appear to be number 357 in the accounts books of John Ferneley under the date of 1832.

No collection of sporting pictures can be complete without an example of the work of Henry Alken ("Ben Tally Ho!") 1785-1851. No other artist can give one such a feeling of exhilaration as he does in a



SMALL PICTURES FOR THE SMALL HOME



Fig. VI. T. H. SHEPHERD  
St. James's Palace. Water-colour, 11 in. x 8 in.

scene depicting a full cry. It is obvious that such a scene is only for the brave. In my hunting days if I had to negotiate a big ugly obstacle I liked to do so with my horse perfectly collected, although in trying to arrive at this I might sometimes make it more difficult for the horse. The other school of thought is ably depicted in the illustration, Fig. V, which gives the horse a completely free head and lets the animal take care of itself. This of course has one very great advantage that in the event of a fall the rider will be thrown clear of his mount. But Alken's hard-riding Meltonians had only one object, and that was to be up and in sight of hounds while running, and to do this successfully meant taking big risks.

The scene depicted in this illustration is from a water-colour drawing, 13½ in. x 9½ in., entitled "Fox Hunting—Full Cry." It is of the artist's late second period which extended from 1820 to 1831. It was in these twelve years that he showed himself to be such a remarkable draughtsman. Nearly all his works during this period were, basically, pencil drawings, some delicately tinted and some left uncoloured. Unfortunately, in a photographic reproduction this soft and pleasant colouring—the great charm of an Alken water-colour—is lost.

The paintings depicting scenes of London, of historic buildings and of famous places on or near the banks of the Thames, will always have a particular appeal to Englishmen, and when such paintings come up for sale at auctions there is usually spirited bidding for them.

The last of the illustrations, Fig. VI, shows a water-colour drawing, 11 in. by 8 in., of St. James's Palace by T. H. Shepherd, which was exhibited last June at the Antique Dealers' Fair at Grosvenor House.

Unfortunately, very little is known about this artist. Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* dismisses him in very few lines and gives his date of birth as 1824 and date of death as 1842, meaning that the artist was only 18 when he died, which I find hard to credit. A

letter which I received from a picture dealer states: "Shepherd was active from 1815 to 1855," which seems much more likely to be correct.

While on the subject of this artist, I feel there is an opportunity for someone to write a treatise on the Shepherd confraternity. This would meet a real need, as at the present time there are no less than four Shepherds listed in Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, and the information we can glean about them is contained in 36 half page lines, which seems little enough space to allot to these talented artists who were producing such excellent and varied work during the XVIIth, XVIIIth and XIXth centuries.

The care of pictures, even in a large collection, need not give undue work and trouble, if the frames and the canvases receive a light dusting every day. One can make small adjustments oneself: a canvas will

sometimes become slack, but a few gentle taps with a hammer will tighten the wedges at the back of the frame and make the canvas taut again. The common house-fly can be a source of trouble and will mess a canvas, but this can be cleaned very simply with a soft chamois leather dipped in tepid water, well-rinsed and gently rubbed over the whole surface, then dried and polished with another soft cloth. This will leave the canvas with a clean and fresh appearance. When it comes to varnishing, repairing or lining a canvas the work should always be entrusted to an expert. Varnishing can be overdone, and in very old paintings I prefer to see the mellow colours, cleaned, of course, but not carrying a very high polish.

In choosing positions for one's pictures, one must remember that the walls in a north room will show them off to best advantage. The strong light will not affect paintings but one should always keep delicate water-colours away from the glare of the sun. One should listen to advice given on the choice of a frame because so many beautiful pictures are completely spoiled by being over or under framed, or by frames inappropriately gilded—the framing of pictures is a subject on its own, but I cannot refrain from drawing attention to it in this article. And let me end with a suggestion. If wall space is not suitable or available try this: frame a little water-colour drawing, an Alken if you like, in a half-inch mahogany frame with a double gilt beading, allowing for a ½ in. mount, and place as one would do a framed photograph on a 1790 Sheraton table. The result is quite charming.

I have half-a-dozen small water-colour drawings framed in this manner. This has an additional advantage that they can be moved easily from one room to another when a change in the arrangement of one's pictures is desired. Every time that I have made such a change-round I have felt a thrill similar to that which comes with the buying of a new picture.

# LOVE SPOONS

BY EDWARD H. PINTO

WHILST love messages on wood are by no means as common as love of wood, they are far too popular in the opinion of many owners of standing trees, who have dedicated their woodlands to the nation. Even if Tom does love Mary deeply, he need not display to all and sundry the depth of his love by the depth of the cuts which he makes through the cambium layer of an unoffending living tree. The arrow-pierced heart, decorated with his and Mary's initials or names, can represent a real heart wound and means of entry for disease to the unfortunate tree, and there is no need for love of wood and love on wood to be incompatible; for if Tom will only be patient enough to wait until the tree has reached maturity and is cut down, he can then make

love gifts made by the rustic swains, but judging by survivals the most popular at different times and in different localities seem to have been spoons, stay busks, knitting sheaths and lace bobbins. That is not to say that all of these objects were always love tokens, but some of each of them certainly were and in spoons the love spoons are usually quite a distinct variety, designed as a symbol rather than as a useful domestic object.

Not all love spoons were made in Wales: we have collected some specimens from Scandinavia, Switzerland and Eastern Europe, but the vast majority are Welsh and nowhere else does the making and giving of a spoon as a love token seem to have been such a general custom in the not so distant past. In Wales the custom was



Fig. I (left). XIXth century Welsh love spoons in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. G and H, which are the earliest, have the finest detail. By permission of the National Museum of Wales.

Top row : A, B, C & D.  
Below : E, F, G, H & I.



Fig. II (right). A selection of double bowl spoons, meaning "We two are one." By permission of the National Museum of Wales.

Top : A, B, C & D.  
Below : E, F & G.

from it much more attractive and permanent love tokens, as his ancestors have done before him.

From remote times men have conveyed their affectionate sentiments to their sweethearts by means of wooden objects, and very charming are some of these mementoes of courting, or milestones on the road of love. Such objects fall into two main categories—the more sophisticated objects bought by the donor of either sex for the recipient of the opposite sex, and the much simpler objects, usually made by a man as a labour of love and keepsake for his sweetheart.

Under the first heading, popular purchases in wood of the past have included elaborate medieval combs, purses, patch boxes, snuff boxes, snuff rasps and pipe cases, to name but a few.

Fashions have changed from time to time in the actual

universal enough to have added to the English language the term "spooning" and to have built up a precise etiquette.

The carved spoon in Wales was not the equivalent of an engagement ring; it was much more the love letter of a tongue-tied but would-be wooer, who endeavoured to put into it all the love and devotion which his lips could not frame nearly as adequately as his hands. It was a question in wood and acceptance of the gift was an affirmative message that the girl of his choice looked on him with some favour and that courting could then commence. It is related that in the past a village coquette might have more than one such spoon hanging up in her cottage home.

Most of the love spoons illustrated here give evidence of the thoughtful planning and the great number of hours

## LOVE SPOONS

which must have gone into their carving, whilst the care with which they have been preserved is evidence enough of the sentimental value which was attached to them by their recipients. Bearing in mind, too, that, in many instances, they must have been created with very crude tools, probably a pocket knife the chief one, and at the end of a long and hard day's work, and sometimes by the flickering illumination of a candle or rush light, they are a remarkable example of dogged devotion. Not all of them are gifts from landsmen; quite a number of them show by their motifs that they are the work of sailors, who doubtless whiled away some tedious time in foreign parts whittling away the wood, whilst dreaming of the reception which their gifts would evoke on their homecoming and the effect which they might have on their future lives.

additional appendage, they represent nothing more than a *tour de force* of the carver. Examples of lantern and ball carving occur in Figs. (ii)C, (iii)A, B, C, D, E & F, (iv)B, (v)A & B, (vi)B, C, F, H & J and (vii)D & E. The loose ring or chain are part of the solid block from which are carved Figs. (ii)F, (iii)A, B, C, D & E, (iv)B, (v)A and B, (vi)B, C & J, (vii)F & (viii)D & E. All these undoubtedly represent a high standard of skill, for the slightest slip of the carving tool would irretrievably ruin the whole composition.

The heart motif, which requires no explanation, is included in one or more places on nearly all specimens and the roundel or wheel, supposed to signify "I will work for you," is nearly as popular; probably the spade outline, Fig. (vi)J, is another variant of this same theme.



Fig. III. Fine quality XVIIIth century ball and lantern spoons in the National Museum of Wales. A & B are of outstanding quality.  
By permission of the National Museum of Wales.  
A, B, C & D and at foot right, E & F.

Whilst skill in execution varies considerably, these love spoons are very rarely works of art, but they are essentially entirely unselfconscious peasant expression and, as such, have all the charm of wooden home-made Valentines—works of love which money could not buy.

There seems to be no record of when the love spoon custom commenced, but the earliest dated specimen which I have seen is one in the National Museum of Wales, which is inscribed 1714. Although other XVIIIth century spoons are included among those illustrated, the majority which are dated are XIXth century work. Where not dated, it is often impossible to assess the age accurately, as fashion largely passes peasant art without leaving any mark and

traditional forms are passed on from generation to generation. Nevertheless, as I hope to show, certain features do, in some instances, give reasonable grounds for hazarding a date.

Any suitable species of wood that was easily available seems to have been used and although sycamore and beech, the traditional woods for utilitarian spoons, seem to have been the favourites, I have seen love spoons made from yew, pear, apple, plum, lime, holly, walnut, box, elm and pine.

Most of the carved symbolism is simple and easily read, but there does not seem any satisfactory explanation for the open "lanterns" containing loose balls carved from the solid, which occur frequently in the handles of love spoons, as well as in peasant carved knitting sheaths, lace bobbins, pipe stoppers, seals and other treen of Great Britain and Scandinavia. Probably, like wooden rings and chains carved from the same piece, which are often an



Fig. IV. Two clever and very original sailor's gift love spoons in the National Museum of Wales.  
By permission of the Museum.

The keyhole outline, Fig. (i)A, means "My house is yours" and this is sometimes signified alternatively by the outline of a key or small house. Two spoon bowls sprouting from one handle, Figs. (ii)A, B, C, D, E, F & G, (vi)G and (vii)C & J mean "We two are one." The presence of one or more large bowls between two smaller ones, Figs. (iv)A, (vi)B and (vii)H, is said to intimate the desire for a large family. Love forks, Figs. (v)A and (vii)A, are occasionally found as a variant from spoons and sometimes they are included with knives as an addition, Fig. (iv)A & B.

The most obvious gifts from sailors are Fig. (iv)A, cut from a single piece of wood 12 in. by 7 in., inlaid with sealing wax, Fig. (iv)B which is cut from one piece 27 in. long, terminating at the top of the chain in a whistle, and Fig. (vi)D with a rope stem to the handle, which is carved with a sailing vessel and a fish.

## A P O L L O

Fig. V. From the collection of the author and Mrs. Pinto. A & B are fine quality, mid-XVIIIth century spoons; C & J are unusual and I an unusually early specimen dated 1720. Top row: A, B, C, E, F, G. Centre: D. Below: H, I, J, K.

Fig. (vi)K is what is known as a Carnarvon crooked spoon. Figs. (v)K and (vi)I have glass panels, enclosing in the one instance the message "A present from Dyhrynn, Merionethshire, Maker H.R.", and in the other, specimens of different textiles. Fig. (ii)D & E seem to have contained similar panels originally.

Other interesting information appertaining to form, inscriptions, the provenance or dates of the spoons illustrated, is as follows: Fig. (i)A & C from Beaumaris, Anglesey; Fig. (i)E from Rhyl, Denbighshire; Fig. (i)F from Pembrokeshire; Fig. (i)G inscribed I.C. 1822; Fig. (i)H sealing wax inlaid and dated 1813; Fig. (i)I from N. Wales; Fig. (ii)A inscribed T.R. from Solva, Pembrokeshire; Fig. (ii)B from Conway, Caernarvonshire; Fig. (ii)C dated 1872; Fig. (ii)D from Carmarthen; Fig. (ii)E sealing wax inlaid from N. Wales; Fig. (ii)F from Colwyn Bay, Denbighshire; Fig. (iii)A circa 1750 from Llanwrst, Denbighshire; Fig. (iii)B, circa 1750, from N. Wales; Fig. (iii)C from Beaumaris, Anglesey; Fig. (iii)D from Colwyn Bay, Denbighshire; Fig. (iii)E inscribed M. Powell, Cwm-Nant-Moch, 1779; Fig. (iv)A sealing wax inlaid, inscribed M.D., dated 1856, from N. Wales; Fig. (iv)B total length 26 in. in one piece, said to have been made on a farm at either Bridgend or Caerphilly, Glamorgan; Fig. (v)C, a most unusual spoon with bowl at right angles to stem—this and Fig. (v)J, another unusual type, were formerly in the Evan Thomas collection; Fig. (v)I, with a heart-shaped bowl which has never been hollowed out, is inscribed July 18th,



1720; Fig. (vi)A, dated 1714 and unusual because the handle is formed of a hand grasping a book, four fingers being on one side of the volume, the point representing a thumb on the reverse; Fig. (vi)G, initials J.E., dated 1865; Fig. (vi)I dated 1861; Fig. (vi)L, an outsize and finely executed spoon, 27 in. long, is inscribed Margaret Thomas; Fig. (vii)I unusual carving, reminiscent of a mid-XIXth century cut paper Valentine; Fig. (vii)K inscribed WCW, dated 1870; Fig. (viii)A brings history up-to-date with a pair of sycamore love spoons on a heart-shaped cushion dated 1937—made by D. Lewis, Ffotrasol of Cardiganshire, the ensemble won the first prize in the Llangeitho Eisteddfod of 1937; Fig. (viii)B, the handle quaintly shaped as a pair of spectacles, from Pembrokeshire or Carmarthenshire; Fig. (viii)C, inscribed M.I., 1727, from Tonyrefail, Glamorgan; Fig. (viii)E, notable because the bowl provides a perfect heart motif.

Now all this information unfortunately does not seem to provide any clue as regards the relationship of design to locality, but it does tell us that the custom was strong in coastal districts of the extreme North and South of Wales, and therefore spoons may easily have been more the labour of fishermen than agricultural workers. It also suggests the prevalence of certain outlines and forms of ornament around particular dates.

In support of this latter theory, it will be convenient to divide the spoons illustrated into four groups.

In Group I we have Fig. (v)I—1720, Fig. (vi)A—1714 and Fig. (viii)C—1727. The first two are very small, 5 in. long,



Fig. VI. A fine selection from the private museum of the Rev. C. J. Sharp at Shepreth. A, the earliest dated specimen illustrated, is inscribed 1714. Top row: A, B, C & D. Top centre: E & F, G. Next centre row: H, I, J, K below J. At foot: L. By courtesy of the owner.

## LOVE SPOONS

original in outline and free from geometric ornament or piercing; the last, Fig. (viii)C, has grown longer—it measures 9½ in.—and although still of simple outline, it has developed fine chip carving as a surface ornament.

In Group II we have Fig. (iii)A & B, made about 1750, and Fig. (iii)E dated 1779. In the first two, the fine chip carving previously noted has been developed as an all-over surface decoration, the handle has become rectangular in section, the ball, lantern and chain have been introduced, the bowls are finely shaped and tip tilted and the whole of the sharp precision carving shows the high level of craftsmanship and design general at that

although the craftsmanship is still good, the detail small and the outline simple. Figs. (i)A & D, (v)F and (vii)G, though of lower quality, may have been made around this time and Figs. (vi)E & F and (viii)D, which are of fine quality, should probably be dated similarly.

We now come to Group IV, comprising Fig. (ii)C—1872, Fig. (vi)G—1865, Fig. (vi)I—1861 and Fig. (vii)K—1870. The first two have the double bowl and bearing in mind the general similarity, we should probably be correct in including all the double bowl spoons in Fig. (ii), as well as the single bowl spoons Figs. (i)B, C, E, F & I, (v)D and (vii)H in this 1860-70 category.



Fig. VII. Some attractive spoons in the possession of Messrs. Gilbert Morris of Ffynnon-groew, Holywell. The influence of mid-XIXth century cut paper Valentines shows strongly in I. By courtesy of Messrs. Morris.

Top row : A, B, C, D & E.  
Below : F.  
Centre : G, H & I.  
Foot : J, K & L.

Fig. VIII. Unusual specimens in the National Museum of Wales. A is a XXth century prizewinner, B most original, C dated 1727, D of exceptional quality and E notable for the heart bowl. By permission of the National Museum of Wales.

Top : A.  
Side : B & E.  
Foot : C & D.



Sealing wax inlay seems to have been used at odd times throughout the XIXth century.

I realise that the reading of this article has unfortunately entailed much dodging about from figure to figure. My apology must be the hope that the analytical comparisons of related features, taken in conjunction with the dated specimens which are included among the sixty-four love spoons illustrated, will assist other collectors in dating their examples of these fascinating love tokens of wood.

\* \* \*

The Hon. Secretary, Antiquarian Section of the British Horological Institute, of 35 Northampton Square, London, E.C.1, informs us that the following activities have been arranged for 1951 : January 17th, at 7 p.m. Dr. F. A. B. Ward to deliver a lecture—“Hour-Reckoning Systems of the past, and Time-Keepers to indicate them,” at Lecture Theatre, Science Museum, South Kensington.

February 14th. Informal discussion (further details available later). March 10th. Visit to Big Ben.

## SALE ROOM NOTES & PRICES

BY BRICOEUR

THE critical political situation of the past weeks does not appear to have affected auction prices, one way or another. Contrary to the belief of some, the value of works of art does not vary from week to week, as do stocks and shares. The high value which fine examples possess at the present time is largely due to the demand from investors, although this does not include things which are difficult to live with under present conditions, chiefly on account of size, or those works of art in styles which are, for the time being, unfashionable. The most notable increase in value has been in the field of ceramics, particularly in English XVIIIth century porcelain and in French soft-paste, although in this case it seems more probable that the rapidly increasing numbers of collectors are responsible; investors do not regard the fragile nature of porcelain with enthusiasm.

THE BURTON SALE. The dispersal of the Baroness Burton's collection of works of art took place at Christie's on 22nd-24th November. The following is a record of the more important items:

WORCESTER PORCELAIN. A pair of small vases, 5 in. high, of tulip-shape and painted in Sèvres style, with Watteau-esque figures, 175 gns. A pair of Dr. Wall period vases and covers, 15 in. high, painted in colours with exotic birds, plants and trees in landscapes, on a mazarin-blue ground, 340 gns. A set of three Dr. Wall vases, with square seal marks in blue, painted in the style of O'Neale with subjects after Wouwermans, on a marbled dark blue ground, 8½ in. and 7 in. high, 100 gns.

CHELSEA PORCELAIN. A pair of gold anchor figures of a shepherd and shepherdess standing before flowering tree stumps, in colours and gold, 280 gns. A gold anchor two-handled cup and cover, 6 in. high, painted with children in garden landscapes, on a marbled dark blue ground, 175 gns. Another two-handled bowl, cover and stand, same mark, painted with figures and garden landscapes, 7 in. diam., 195 gns. A pair of gold anchor vases, with Watteau-esque figures, 9 in. high, similar to a pair in the Jones Collection, South Kensington, 400 gns. Another pair, 6½ in. high, also gold anchor mark, painted after Francois Boucher with pastoral scenes, from the Countess of Portsmouth's collection (1875), 600 gns., and a pair from the Louis Huth collection (1881), 8 in. high, gold anchor mark, also painted with Boucher scenes, 2,100 gns.

CONTINENTAL POTTERY. A pair of Urbino XVth century circular dishes, 13 in. diam., painted with Venus and Cupid and an allegorical scene, 30 gns.; a Deruta dish, same period and 16 in. diam., painted with a lady teaching a child to read, 92 gns. A XVth century Hispano-Moresque circular dish, 15½ in. diam., painted with formal stems in copper lustre, 38 gns.

CHINESE PORCELAIN. A pair of Ch'ien Lung famille rose baluster-shaped vases, painted on blue and turquoise grounds, 23½ in. high, 230 gns., and a slightly larger pair, similar, 250 gns. A set of three famille rose vases and a pair of beakers, Yung Chêng or early Ch'ien Lung period, 22½ in. and 18 in. high, of baluster form and modelled in relief with flowering stems and painted in enamels, 260 gns. A K'ang Hsi famille vert vase, 17½ in. high, with slender ovoid body, enamelled with birds and flowering stems, 250 gns. A pair of Chinese vases modelled as bamboo stems with fungus and foliage, with Louis XV ormolu mounts, 6 in. high, 220 gns., and a pair with Louis XVI ormolu mounts, the vases of square section and painted with flower sprays, 9½ in. high, 190 gns.

SEVRES AND VINCENNES PORCELAIN. The Vincennes and Sèvres factories adopted the extremely useful practice of marking their wares with a letter denoting the year in which they were made; beginning in 1753 with "A." In 1777 the letter "Z" had been reached, when the alphabetical sequence with double letters was recommenced, finishing with "RR" in 1795, when the revolution brought an end to the system. A pair of Vincennes éventail jardinières and stands, with the mark for 1754, 7½ in. high, made 500 gns. These were painted in blue and flesh tints by Vieillard. Many of the French painters and gilders were also obliging enough to sign their work. A pair of salt-cellars (1776), 4 in. wide, and painted with flowers on a rose Pompadour ground, 310 gns. A cup and saucer (1790), painted by Massy with named birds on a turquoise ground, 88 gns. Another, with two saucers (1757), and painted by Mutel, 55 gns. A ewer and basin (1770) with pear-shaped body and painted with floral festoons on a gilt seeded ground, basin 14½ in. wide, 150 gns. An éventail jardinière and stand, 8½ in. high, with birds and foliage, 260 gns., and a pair of two-handled vases, gilded by Vincent, who signed with the rebus 2000, painted with Orpheus and Narcissus on a *bleu du roi* ground, 11½ in. high, 230 gns. A pair of biscuit figures of Cupid and Psyche, 11½ in. high, after models by Falconet, made in 1758, made 880 gns., and a pair of two-handled ice pails, covers and liners (1768) decorated by Baudoin and the gilding by Le Guay, 9 in. wide and painted with bouquets on a rose Pompadour ground, 3,000 gns.



Fig. I. One of a pair of Mennecy figures, of children in Russian costume, 5½ in. high, for which 880 gns. were paid at the Burton sale.

The following pieces were enhanced in value by having contemporary French ormolu mounts. A pair of biscuit figures of boys, modelled after Pajou, 7½ in. high, 180 gns., a pair of Louis XVI vases in *gros-bleu* and similar to a pair of boat-shaped vases at Buckingham Palace, 14½ in. high, 200 gns., and a pair of figures of a girl and a youth after Francois Boucher, forming candelabra, 2,300 gns.

MEISSEN PORCELAIN. A shell-shaped casket, with the interior painted with figures at a repast on a terrace, 6½ in. wide, 190 gns.; a pair of circular plates, 11 in. diam. and painted with chinoiserie in the manner of J. G. Heroldt, 280 gns.; a large dinner service from the second half of the XVIIIth century, with waved and gilt borders and painted with birds and trees, comprising some 136 pieces, 550 gns., and another of some 97 pieces, of similar date and style but including ice-pails, 720 gns. A pair of cats by the great modeller J. J. Kaendler, with Louis XVI ormolu bases, 8½ in. high, brought 800 gns. and a pair of figures of swans, with contemporary ormolu stands, forming candelabra, 26 in. high, 1,650 gns. A porcelain bracket clock painted with Watteau-esque scenes and with a later English movement, 19 in. high, 300 gns.

FRENCH FURNITURE. A pair of small Louis XVI parquetry encoignures, 15 in. wide, with bowed fronts and marble tops, 145 gns., and an earlier pair of encoignures, 29 in. wide, with serpentine fronts inlaid with a parquetry of various woods, 170 gns. A small parquetry table, 15½ in. wide, once belonging to H.H. the Duke of Teck, made 105 gns., and a Louis XVI upright secretaire, veneered with satinwood in mahogany borders and with inset Sèvres porcelain plaques, 26 in. wide, 175 gns. A Louis XV serpentine-fronted commode, with two drawers, in kingwood and rosewood, by P. Roussel, M.E., 420 gns., and a Louis XV marquetry commode stamped by Migeon, inlaid with a marquetry design on kingwood and with a marble top, 51 in. wide, 1,050 gns. An early Louis XVI commode of three short and two long drawers made 560 gns. This was inlaid in various woods in parquetry. Parquetry is distinguished from marquetry in that it denotes a regular or geometric pattern; the latter implies the use of floral, foliate or pictorial patterns.

A very fine Louis XVI marquetry upright secretaire by D. de Loose, M.E., had a pattern of shipping and landscape scenes. This piece, which brought 780 gns., is known to have been in the Hamilton Palace sale of 1882. This may perhaps be identified with Lot 519 in Christie's catalogue of that historic sale, which then sold for £315. A pair of Louis XV giltwood side tables, 6 ft. wide, with elaborately carved frames and porphyry slab tops were also from Hamilton Palace, and brought 92 gns. (It is

## SALE ROOM NOTES AND PRICES

difficult to identify these with a pair in the 1882 catalogue, although it is recorded that another pair, 6 ft. wide, then made no less than 2,016 gns. In those days vast proportions in furniture were, if anything, an asset, whereas now the reverse is the case.) A Louis XV Kingwood bureau-a-cylindre by J. F. Oeben, M.E., 60 in. wide, made 800 gns. There were also a number of French flat-topped writing tables. An ebонised example, by Montigny, M.E., 54 in. wide, made 580 gns., a Louis XV mahogany table, 68 in. wide, 300 gns., another 67 in. wide, by H. Hansen, M.E., 210 gns., and another inlaid in marquetry by Petit, M.E., 67 in. wide, 520 gns.

The French upholstered furniture included a set of ten Louis XV giltwood fauteuils, covered in cream satin *appliquéd* with floral sprays, 750 gns., a set of twelve Louis XV large giltwood fauteuils covered in magnificent Gobelins tapestry, 2,600 gns., and a pair of settees, 6 ft. 10 in. wide, covered in Beauvais tapestry, 1,680 gns. A cheval firescreen with a panel of Gobelins tapestry signed "Neilson ex" made 300 gns. James Neilson (1749-88) was a Scotsman employed at the Gobelins and who achieved great renown as a weaver.

TAPESTRY. The set of seven Gobelins tapestries for which 2,100 gns. were bid, were woven with the History of Jason, and signed by the weavers Audran and Cozette, and moreover were dated 1744, 1745 and 1746. This famous set had once hung, it is believed, at Kenwood, Hampstead, until its sale, about 1870, when they were purchased by Mr. Michael Bass, father of the first Lord Burton.

The total realised by the sale was £64,828.

PORCELAIN. A November sale at Sotheby's also included fine Sèvres porcelain, sent by Baroness Nairne from Bowood, Wiltshire. A pair of turquoise cache-pots, painted with panels of exotic birds, 5 in., and a smaller pair, 4 in., made £70. A pair of square flower stands (1755) painted by Carrier with flowers on a *bleu-du-roi* ground, 5½ in., £115, a fan-shaped vase and stand, painted in pink, crimson and gilt, with flowers and *oeil-de-perdrix*, 7½ in., £160. A Vincennes vase en éventail with an uneven *bleu-du-roi* ground and with bouquets of flowers (1753), 7½ in., £260, and an apple-green vase and stand, of similar shape, painted by Jean Pierre Ledoux (1754), 7½ in., £320. A part dessert service with scattered sprays of pink roses, with the date letter for 1769 and the painter's mark of Guillaume Noel on some pieces, comprising 67 pieces, £270. A turquoise-blue dessert service of 63 pieces, bearing the cypher *P.L.R.*, made £1,050. These initials are believed to be those of Prince Louis de Rohan.

In the same sale a pair of Ch'ien Lung cranes, standing on high pierced rock-work, and with the plumage picked out in gold and with red combs and black beaks, 17 in. high, made £480, and an interesting pair of Chelsea fable candlesticks, evidently inspired, as Dr. Gardner has pointed out, from John Ogilby's designs illustrating *Aesop's Fables*, £150. These had the gold anchor mark and measured 8½ in.; one modelled as the fox and the goat in the well and the other the wolf and the fox in the well.

SILVER. At Christie's sale at the end of November a pair of James II candlesticks, with octagonal bases and baluster stems, 6 in. high, by Pierre Harache, 1686, 26 oz. 5 dwt., made £220, and a Charles II plain tankard and cover, with double-lobed thumbpiece and engraved with a coat-of-arms, 1672, maker's mark I.N. mullet below, 20 oz. 11 dwt., £290. A Paul Storr oval tea kettle, stand and lamp, 1811, with a gross weight of 121 oz. 8 dwt., made £72, a pair of oblong entrée dishes and covers, with entwined serpent handles, 11 in. wide, by Thomas Robins, 1810, 147 oz. 8 dwt., £75. A tea and coffee service comprising some ten pieces, with a gross weight of 321 oz. 8 dwt., brought £230. Another modern lot of heavy weight was a silver-gilt replica of the Warwick vase, 331 oz. 5 dwt., which made £100. Twelve circular dinner plates, 10 in. diam., engraved with a crest, 213 oz., £92. In another sale a Queen Anne cylindrical coffee pot, 9½ in. high, 1711, by John Rand, with the gross weight of 22 oz. 3 dwt., brought £240, and some Continental pieces included a Swedish beaker engraved with panels of trelliswork, 8½ in. high, by J. Leffler, 1807, 12 oz. 16 dwt., £30, a German silver-gilt cup, *circa* 1600, and three other Swedish and Russian beakers, of 1762 and 1732, 16 oz. 8 dwt., £54. Four Louis XV beakers, of 1765, 1747, 1788, and 1771, 20 oz. 16 dwt., £52. A Dutch plain oval teapot, Utrecht made, *circa* 1780, gross weight 13 oz. 7 dwt., made £24, and an Indian circular salver, 12 in. diam., 22 oz., £6.

In Sotheby's sale of 7th December, a set of four George III entrée dishes with gadroon borders, otherwise plain, 1807, 243 oz. 3 dwt., made £145, and four George III candlesticks and four modern candle-branches to fit, 186 oz. 8 dwt., the same price. A pair of George III oval tea caddies engraved with festooning, by Joseph Preedy, 1776, 27 oz. 5 dwt., £48, and four table candlesticks, Sheffield, 1816-18, £26. A set of six Georgian circular salt-cellars, maker's mark I.W., 1822, 31 oz. 18 dwt., £25.



Fig. II. A pair of Meissen cats by Kaendler, on Louis XVI bases, 8½ in. high, for which 800 gns. were bid at Christie's.

and a George III salver by Henry Chawner, 17½ in. diam., 81 oz. 8 dwt., £50. This was engraved with contemporary armorials. A heavy oval sauce tureen and cover with gadroon and shell rim, 1809, 40 oz. 2 dwt., made £29, and a George III toasted-cheese dish engraved with armorials, maker's mark W.S., 1798, 53 oz. 7 dwt., £54. One hundred pieces of table silver, mostly Victorian, with a total weight of 262 oz. 5 dwt., made £105.

At Robinson and Foster's a chased and embossed two-handled cup, weighing 142 oz., made £42, and a pair of Victorian entrée dishes, 11 in. diam., 124 oz., also £42. At Phillips, Son and Neale a modern King's pattern table service of 195 oz. made £118, and a Victorian tea and coffee service, comprising four pieces, 73 oz., £66.

FURNITURE. At a furniture sale at Sotheby's an attractive George III mahogany wing bookcase, with glazed doors surmounted by an urn, 7 ft. 8 in. high by 10 ft. 6 in. wide, made £400. A Hepplewhite mahogany corner cupboard, also with glazed doors and with a carved frieze, 3 ft. 6 in. wide by 6 ft. 10 in. high, £50, and an XVIIth century Welsh oak dresser with three tiers of shelves and cabriole legs, 6 ft. wide, £20. A Sheraton small mahogany sideboard banded with satinwood, 4 ft. wide, brought £45 in the same sale, and a later sale on 8th December another, 4 ft. 9 in. wide, and of better quality, £120. Dining tables which have centre pedestal supports, leaving plenty of leg-room, bring more money than dining-tables with the legs placed at the sides. A Georgian small mahogany dining-table with twin centre pedestals, brought £145.

At Phillips, Son and Neale a set of fourteen walnut dining chairs, of Queen Anne style, all with needlework seats, made £125, a Hepplewhite mahogany breakfast bookcase, 6 ft. 6 in. long, £135, and another, 4 ft. 6 in. wide, £72. A Sheraton library breakfast bookcase, 8 ft. long, brought £100.

At Knight, Frank and Rutley's a mahogany bureau bookcase, with glazed doors in the upper part, 3 ft. 6 in. wide, £52, a semi-circular walnut commode, with three doors, 4 ft. wide, £80, and a Georgian mahogany sideboard, 6 ft. wide, £82. At Robinson and Foster's a Regency rosewood and satinwood banded sofa table, 4 ft. 6 in. wide, £56 14s., a set of six old English spindle-back chairs, with rush seats, £39 18s., and a George III mahogany bow-fronted sideboard, with drawers and cupboards, 5 ft. 3 in. wide, £56 14s.

At a country sale held at Ashfield, Malton, Yorks, by Henry Spencer and Sons, a Sheraton mahogany Carlton House writing table, of mellow colour and inlaid with oval medallions of boxwood, 5 ft. 6 in. wide, brought £825, a set of eight Hepplewhite shield-back mahogany dining chairs with saddle-shaped seats covered in brocade, £185, and a small Queen Anne walnut bureau, with sloping front, 2 ft. 8 in. wide, £195. At another country sale at Boynton Hall, Bridlington, conducted by the same auctioneers, an unusually attractive Chippendale wall mirror, of large size, 8 ft. 6 in., made £120. Wall mirrors of large scale must be of particularly fine quality to attract high bids nowadays. A Hepplewhite mahogany canopy bedstead, known as the Duke of York's Bed (after the third son of George III), with green damask hangings, made £250, a mid-XVIIth century mahogany side table, in the manner of Vile and Cobb, with a plain top and the frieze carved in relief with scrolls, 5 ft. wide, £220, and a set of four Queen Anne walnut side chairs, with stuffed backs, £210. Seven other Queen Anne walnut chairs, with needlework covers, brought £350.

## BOOKS

### Music to Hear

BY CONSTANCE JENKINS

THE WORLD OF MUSIC SERIES. Max Parish.

THE WALTZ. By Mosco Carner. 6s. net.  
GERMAN SONG. By Elisabeth Schumann. 6s. net.  
OPERA COMIQUE. By Martin Cooper. 7s. 6d. net.  
THE ORCHESTRA. By Adam Carse. 7s. 6d. net.  
THE PROMS. By Thomas Russell. 7s. 6d. net.

TO do full justice to this delightful series in a short review is impossible. I can only advise readers to get copies for themselves. They will never regret it.

#### *The Waltz.*

When I first went to Vienna I was lucky in having an introduction to an English family who used to take me most Sunday afternoons to hear and see Johann Strauss the Younger and his famous orchestra. It was very long ago, but I can never forget the wonderful impression he and his music made on me. He was old, over seventy, but looked no more than fifty. That dapper little figure with jet black hair may have owed something to hair dye and corsets, but what matter? Lenbach's portrait of him, reproduced in this book, shows him just as I remember him. The fire of his playing and his management of the splendid orchestra suggested that he must be in early manhood. Every now and then he would turn and face the audience, fiddling energetically, then back again to lead and conduct the orchestra. And how they played! No one else could approach their rendering of the waltzes, with the slight anticipation of the second beat that gives the characteristic lilt to the Viennese waltz. It is curious to read that "the waltz comes of a low parentage" in the inns and beer-gardens of Vienna, and that for a long time it was generally regarded by very proper persons as "destitute of grace, delicacy and propriety." Fortunately Queen Victoria finally conferred respectability on it by her approval. A charming reproduction of the Queen and the Prince Consort waltzing is included among the illustrations. Both from this and the coloured frontispiece it seems to have been "correct" for the partners to give the impression that their mutual proximity was the last thing they desired. Reading this charming book carries one back to the glorious city which, like the waltz, "seems to have vanished for ever."

#### *German Song.*

It would be hard to find a better guide among the riches of German Song than Mme. Elisabeth Schumann. This volume is the most practical of the series, and may well prove indispensable to singers and concert givers. While fully recognising the greatness of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and other famous song writers, Mme. Schumann devotes considerable space to Hugo Wolf, whose tragically intermittent genius is not even yet appreciated here as it deserves to be. Possibly this may be partly due to the lack of first-rate translations of the poems. He drew on the best poets and the best are notoriously the hardest to translate. Mme. Schumann devotes a whole chapter to him and ends by saying: "I have called his work 'immortal' and 'gigantic'; no lesser words would suffice." Herself a great singer, she ends her book with a short chapter on "The Interpretation of Song," pointing out "how important it is for a singer to penetrate to the heart, not only of the meaning of the words, but of the music as well."

#### *Opéra Comique.*

Mr. Cooper begins his account of this most uniquely Parisian institution by confessing that no English words can convey its meaning, and also that even to the French its character changed entirely at different dates. Its humble beginning was in the sideshows at the two great fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, where the entertainment was no more refined than the public taste. At first the music was a quite unimportant accessory at these shows, but the snatches of popular songs (vaudevilles) and the parodies of more serious compositions led to the creation, between 1730 and 1750, of a new species, the real Opéra Comique, by the genius of one man—Favart. The complicated history of the ups and downs of the Opéra Comique occupies most of this delightfully written and illustrated book. Offenbach, Hérold, Thomas, Gounod and other great and prolific composers so entirely changed the character of the Opéra Comique, which includes such works as *Carmen* and *Faust*, that spoken dialogue is often the only distinction between it and grand opera.

#### *The Orchestra.*

Mr. Carse's admirable book on the growth of the modern orchestra from the medieval "chest of viols" has an introduction by Sir Adrian Boult in which he tells a story of Richter's showing a recalcitrant horn player how to perform a certain passage on his own instrument. He also records the great compliment that Nikisch paid the London Symphony Orchestra in 1912 when he chose them to go with him to America on a five weeks' tour. Megalomania is so widespread just now that most persons have no idea of the inaccuracy committed by the heavy resoring of classical compositions that a performance by a colossal modern orchestra necessitates. If the public realized that Mozart wrote, e.g., his piano concerto in D minor for an orchestra consisting of only one flute, two each of oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, drums and violins, one viola, one 'cello and one double bass, they would soon insist on a reversion to something nearer in scale to the little orchestra that the composer had in mind.

#### *The Proms.*

It is a feather in our caps that the first public concerts ever given took place in London. In 1672, John Banister, a violinist whom the King had sent to study in France, had "musick performed by excellent masters" at his house, and these concerts continued till shortly before his death. Thomas Britton, "the small-coal man," took them on in 1678, *gratis* at first, but later for an annual subscription of ten shillings. Promenade concerts, which had begun in France in 1833, were introduced here in 1838 as "Promenade Concerts à la Musard," conducted at the Lyceum, which was then the English Opera House, by Musard himself. A new series was started in 1840 by Eliason, whose assistant, Jullien, became the most glamorous, if not the greatest of all conductors. Judging by the portraits of Jullien, his tailor helped to create an "atmosphere," and when conducting Beethoven's symphonies he wore white gloves and his baton was brought to him on a salver. For our own Proms we are indebted to the great vision and faith, as well as to the generosity, of several men, above all to Robert Newman and Henry Wood. It should never be forgotten that we owe the now universal adoption in England of the Continental low pitch to Dr. George Cathcart, the throat specialist, who insisted upon it in return for his generous financial support. The fascinating story of the Proms told here by Mr. Russell makes one proud of what has been accomplished in the education of the English public by what is nothing less than a national institution.

SWISS STAINED GLASS OF THE XIVTH CENTURY, with Introduction by Michael Stettler. Pp. 1—31, plus frontispiece and 1 plates in colour. Small folio. "Iris Color Books" (Batsford). 21/4 net.

THE volume under review is a most attractive piece of bookwork and its size is large enough to do justice to the fine colour plates with which it is embellished. To be sure, its title is something of a misnomer since it does not deal with Swiss glass generally but only treats of that in the church of Koenigswalden. This is made clear on the title-page, but the bald statement on the cover is misleading. Although the work depicted is that of the XIVth century, it must clearly have been prior to the discovery of 'silver stain,' for no trace of this can be seen. Indeed, all the yellows seem to be of pot-metal, and in no instance can a golden halo (an example chosen at random) be found leaded in one piece with a head—a procedure common enough in English work of a somewhat similar date. The draughtsmanship is curiously reminiscent of English work—though a thought more graceful perhaps—and the pronounced 'S' bend of the figures has many parallels in this country.

Of the plates themselves it is difficult to particularise. That of St. Francis preaching to the birds is delightfully whimsical—each bird has definite character, and all are so obviously listening. The trees are purely conventional, and the whole scene stands out against a diapered background; diaper, indeed, seems much favoured, and in each light some variety of it is introduced. Other panels deal with incidents taken from the Lives of Our Lord, the Virgin, St. Clare, St. Nicholas and others. One of the St. Nicholas panels shows a sleeping parent whose daughter is just about to awake him to show him the golden ball with which St. Nicholas has endowed her. (Actually three daughters were involved, and our pawnbrokers' sign is said to be based on this story.) The girl's father has purple hair!

Although the series are mainly shown in medallions, there are full-sized figures here and there—notably of Apostles—but even in the medallions the spandrels are used to incorporate other smaller subjects. Like our own King's College, Cambridge, the Resurrection scene shows Jesus equipped with a spade, presumably to give colour to Mary's 'believing him to be the gardener,' an unusual, but quite telling, interpretation. Reference to this treatment in the 'King's' window will be found in E. F. Benson's *The Babe, B.A.*

A well-written Introduction precedes the illustrations. It contains both a full history of the building and the glass, as well as a critical analysis of each window. We recall that this glass was dealt with in a magazine article in 1926 (or thereabouts) which was illustrated in colour, but periodicals are necessary ephemeral, and it is time the subject was dealt with in permanent form. This book should certainly be possessed by all lovers of this ancient craft, who will thus be able to gain some idea of the abiding loveliness of 'storied windows richly dight'!

#### A LOST ENGHEN GOBELIN

The Hague Municipal Museum write that the above tapestry was lost during the war years and they are anxious to have news of it; it measures 3 x 3.50 m. and green or blue-green dominates the colour.

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#### CORRECTION

In the APOLLO ANNUAL for 1951, on page 65, the outstanding silver piece belonging to HOLMES LTD. of 29 Old Bond Street, W.1, is in fact a fine antique silver tea urn, 14 inches high overall, bearing the London hall-mark of 1809, a superb piece of work by Paul Storr. For the sake of good order, readers are invited to correct their copy.